

Labour Monthly

EDITED BY R. PALME DUTT

THE WAR AND THE PEOPLE

OCTOBER

1939

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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Editor :

R. PALME DUTT

Contributing Editors :

LOUIS B. BOUDIN (U.S.A.)

GEORGE SELDES (U.S.A.)

STANLEY B. RYERSON (Canada)

GEORGE FINDLAY (South Africa)

GORDON CRANE (Australia)

ANGUS McLAGAN (New Zealand)

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The Labour Monthly in the War

Our journal came into existence in the immediate sequel of the first imperialist war.

Now that this country is once more at war, the most urgent immediate questions and problems arise for all socialists and democrats.

The LABOUR MONTHLY will direct all its endeavours to perform adequately its service in this hour of supreme trial—to throw the searchlight of Marxism on all the problems raised by the war, to promote in every way the international unity of the working class, and to further our common aims, of democratic advance, of national liberation and of the final victory of the world socialist revolution.

We believe that in such a time as this the need of a Marxist theoretical journal such as the LABOUR MONTHLY, which combines a theoretical approach with the treatment of the burning political problems of the day, is greater than ever and will be recognised by wide sections. The entire present number is devoted to the issues of the present war. In subsequent numbers further issues are planned to be treated, and will be taken up as the situation develops.

The fulfilment of this task in the present difficult conditions requires money and support. We ask urgently from all readers for immediate donations and monthly guarantees in order to help the LABOUR MONTHLY to fulfil its rôle through the war. Since our normal sphere of circulation is restricted by the present limitation of public meetings and branch meetings, we also ask for active personal support of all readers in extending the circulation of the LABOUR MONTHLY by all possible means.

With confidence we appeal for that devoted support which the LABOUR MONTHLY has always been able to arouse, and which has carried it through these eighteen and a half years, in order that it shall go forward to the greater tasks in front.

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

The War—Marxism and War—The Lesson of the First Imperialist War—Causes of the Second Imperialist War—Harvest of Versailles—Strangling the German Revolution—Anglo-French Reaction and Nazi-ism—Who Armed Hitler?—Who Financed Hitler?—Arming the Enemy—The Second Imperialist War—Betrayal of the Polish People—Playing with Fire—Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact—The War Incendiaries—Fruits of Chamberlainism—Imperialist War—Working-Class Policy—Rôle of British Imperialism—The Historical Task of the Working-Class Movement

THE war against which revolutionary Marxism has given consistent warning to the peoples as the inevitable consequence of the policy of refusal of the Peace Front has now broken out. The peoples of Western and Central Europe are involved in war ; its flames threaten to spread over the world. It is no longer a question “ only ” of isolated weaker or “ far-away ” nations. The bombing planes which were ignored over Pekin or Harrar or Madrid have now reached Warsaw and closely threaten Paris and London. Three Great Powers of Europe are at war ; a fourth, the partner of the Axis, awaits its moment ; a fifth, the partner of fascism in Asia, continues its war in the Far East. Only the two greatest world Powers, the Socialist Soviet Union and the United States, remain at present outside the conflict, and may be in a position eventually to exercise a decisive influence on its outcome. The present conflict is not yet a world war ; its first stages in the West unfold themselves with the same ominous slowness which have characterised its eight long years of incubation ; but its further development may be none the less deadly and destructive beyond present imagination, extending not only to world conflict, but to a vast complex of social, national and imperialist struggles intertwined, expressing the culminating stages of capitalist anarchy. This war, which the imperialist reactionaries sought in vain to

divert at the expense of other peoples and whose outbreak is the proof of the inextricable dilemmas of present imperialism, is the third great warning signal, after the war of 1914 and the world economic crisis of 1929, of the bankruptcy of the capitalist world order. The chain of stormy struggles to which it will give rise, through whatever sufferings and horrors humanity has now to pass, can only end in the downfall, not only of the fascist dictatorship which has directly launched it, but of the whole reactionary social order which has nurtured and armed the fascist brigands and brought the world to this pass. This situation, which is only in its opening stages and will pass through many vicissitudes, calls for the coolest judgment and most responsible leadership of all those in whose hands lies the charge of the working-class movement. The decisions we have now to take not only involve the lives of hundreds of thousands and probably of millions of human beings. They involve also the future of socialism and of human civilisation.

MARXISM judges every war concretely.

“We Marxists,” wrote Lenin, “differ both from pacifists and anarchists in that we recognise the necessity of an historical study of each war individually, from the point of view of Marx’s dialectical materialism. There have been many wars in history which, notwithstanding all the horrors, cruelties, miseries and tortures inevitably connected with every war, had a progressive character, i.e., they served the development of mankind, aiding in the destruction of extremely pernicious and reactionary institutions (as, for instance, absolutism or serfdom), or helping to remove the most barbarous despotisms in Europe (that of Turkey and Russia).” (Lenin, *Socialism and War*.)

And again :

From the Marxist standpoint it is necessary in each separate case, for each war in particular, to determine its political content. (Lenin, *Open Letter to Boris Souvarine*.)

In conformity with the historical circumstances, the interrelation of classes, etc., our attitude towards the war must be different at different times. It is foolish to renounce participation in war forever and as a matter of principle. (Lenin, *The Proletariat and the War*.)

At no time is it more important to recall this essential approach than in connection with the present war, in which the basic

character of imperialist conflict for the redivision of the world appears intermingled with other factors, with questions of national liberation and with the question of the working-class and democratic struggle against fascism, in a tangled knot which requires the most careful unravelling. This situation, which places different tasks according to their conditions before different sections of the international working-class movement in pursuit of their common aim, and which will require correspondingly differing tactics at successive stages of development according to the sharp changes in the alignment of forces which may be expected, demands the most sober judgment in order to determine our line and give the sharp and positive answers for action to the questions which the war raises for every working-class fighter. We are in a new type of situation which will demand every capacity of leadership of the working-class movement.

THIS is the second imperialist war. The first imperialist war of 1914 was the war between the then leading rivals of world imperialism, between British and German imperialism for the redivision of the world. All the other myriad issues and conflicts, the French-German and the German-Russian conflict, the national liberation struggles in Europe, the struggles of the Belgian and Servian peoples against conquest and annexation, fell within this central antagonism. This was decisive for the character of the war : both imperialist groups were pursuing predatory annexationist aims under cover of lying talk about defensive war and phrases about national self-determination. From this followed the necessary tactics of the proletariat in the war, as laid down in the Basel Manifesto of the International before the war and carried out by the Bolsheviks : the concentration of the struggle against their own imperialism ; repudiation of the slogan of national defence as the cover for annexationist aims ; repudiation of defencism until the conquest of power by the proletariat. This was the specific form for the development of the imperialist war into the socialist revolution, for the transformation of the imperialist war into civil war for the victory of the socialist revolution, in accordance with the basic aim

of the working class in all imperialist wars. The war of 1914 gave rise to the beginning of the world socialist revolution, with the victory of the socialist revolution in Russia, the initial victory of the revolution in Germany and Central Europe and the spread of the revolutionary wave through the world.

FROM this point the world situation has been transformed. The central issue of world socialism and world capitalism dominates all other issues. The imperialist conflicts, which continue to develop in sharpened forms out of the consequences of the war of 1914, henceforth orientate themselves and develop in relation to this central antagonism. This is the decisive factor which made possible the rapid revival and renewed military threat of the crushed and defeated German imperialism of 1918. In the normal course the next stage of imperialist antagonism, after the crushing of German imperialism, would have passed to the Anglo-American antagonism representing the two major giants of imperialism ; and indeed this began to flare up rapidly in the first phase 1918-20. But this deep underlying antagonism remained beneath the surface, slowly maturing ; it was overlaid by the immediate sharper central antagonism of capitalism and socialism, by the fear of the socialist revolution, and the repercussions of this situation in Europe. Instead, the defeated German imperialism, which it had been intended by Versailles to hold crushed and bound and unable to arise anew, was able in a short space to climb back to power on the basis of this central capitalist-socialist or Anglo-Soviet antagonism. This tactical process underlay the successive stages of Rapallo, of Stresemann's manœuvres, of Hitler's coming to power as the champion of the West against Bolshevism, and of the ease with which Hitler was permitted to re-arm, to receive financial assistance, to tear the bonds of Versailles as if they were made of paper, and to terrorise Europe. British imperialism, which from 1904 to 1918 spent all its resources to deliver the knock-out blow to German imperialism, from 1923 to 1938 spent all its resources to rebuild and restore German imperialism on an even more powerful basis than before as the supposed

weapon against Bolshevism. Thereby it forged the weapon which has been turned against itself. This is the basic cause of the war.

THE Allied Powers at Versailles pursued contradictory aims. On the one hand, they sought to strike down decisively once and for all German imperialism, alike in the economic, in the political and in the military field. Recognising that the weight of numbers of the German people in the centre of Europe, equal to the united populations of Britain and France, and combined with the highest technical industrial development of any European people, must inevitably, under the conditions of imperialism, lead to German domination of Europe, unless violently restrained, they sought by a Punic peace to hold the German nation forcibly divided, lopping off whole sections of the German people and handing them out to satellite States, to shatter German commercial and industrial development by the seizure of shipping and colonies and the load of reparations, and to destroy German naval and military power by enforced disarmament. They understood very well that they were thereby sowing the seeds for a future war of revenge, just as the Germans themselves had done by their Treaty of Frankfurt in 1871. But they calculated that they held such overwhelming power, and had imposed such stringent provision of disarmament and control, that Germany could not begin to attempt to rearm and build its power anew without being struck down again before it had reached the earliest stage. All they had failed to calculate was how rapidly dialectics can crumple up and turn inside out the most unbreakable iron bonds. Foremost among the rank and file of British Conservatism, among the 200 M.P.s who stormed and blustered for a super-Carthaginian peace against Germany in the blindness of imperialist greed, and thus laid the seeds for Hitler's coming to power and for the present war, was one Mr. Neville Chamberlain.

BUT then came the other side of the picture. The Allied Powers at Versailles were even more afraid of Bolshevism

or a genuine popular revolution in Germany than they hated German militarism and imperialism. Between these two conflicting aims they signed their own death-warrant. Only a genuine popular revolution in Germany, which destroys the military and bureaucratic caste, which strikes down the power and possessions of the Junker large landowners and of the big industrialists, and thus establishes the basis for a real democracy in place of the sham democracy of Weimar, can end the menace of German militarism and imperialism for the peoples of Europe. This the German people sought to accomplish in 1918-23. This the Allies would not allow them to accomplish. Under the figleaf of German Social Democracy, which acted as the docile agent of the Allies, the German Spartacist revolution was crushed in blood, the Marxist leaders of the workers were murdered, the Soldiers' and Workers' Councils were dissolved ; and in order to accomplish this, the old military caste was re-established in power and armed anew. With the benevolent connivance of the Allies militarism was re-established in Germany in order to fight Bolshevism. The Inter-Allied Military Missions for the control of disarmament had before them sheaves of reports and documents on the illegal re-arming and the irregular military formations which were allowed to be formed to combat the workers ; but the high authorities turned a blind eye to these reports. The Orgesch, the Black Reichswehr, the Organisation Consul, the Ehrhardt Brigade and the like formed the nucleus of the future fascist corps. All these were built up with the connivance of the British and French ruling class. The Weimar Republic was a façade behind which the old régime held power, until the work of counter-revolution was completed, the façade could be thrown aside and the open terrorist dictatorship proclaimed of the most reactionary and chauvinist sections of finance-capital.

IN this way the British and French ruling class threw away in a few years the outcome of all the sacrifices they had exacted during 1914-18 from their peoples, who had fought, as they believed, to free the world from the menace of German

militarism. On the one side, they sowed the seeds of future war through the Treaty of Versailles by establishing the oppression of the German people. On the other side, by strangling the German popular revolution and encouraging the re-establishment of the military caste, they created the force which could utilise the national grievances in order to rebuild the fighting power of German imperialism with a basis of support in the people. The national oppression alone could not have produced the power to threaten the overwhelming military superiority of Britain and France. The discredited military and reactionary forces alone could never have found a basis of support in the people without the genuine national grievances to play on. But the combination of the two produced the explosive compound—Nazi-ism. From this moment the short-sighted cupidity and brutality of the British and French reactionaries turned to suicidal frenzy. With their own hands they tore down the bonds of Versailles. Arms, finance, territories, all that they had they poured into the lap of the Nazis as their heart's ideal of the noble warriors of civilisation against Bolshevism. "They will cheat you yet, those Junkers," the *Daily Mail* had brawled with monotonous insistency in the days of the Versailles madness. The prediction was correct ; but it was the *Daily Mail* that was "cheated," that lauded Hitler to high heaven, tore down Versailles and handed all to the Nazi-Junker alliance. Hitler is the direct and visible incendiary of the present war. But Hitler is the product of British and French imperialism. *If Hitler applied the match to the gunpowder, it was the British and French ruling class that laid the trail of the gunpowder and placed the match in his hand.* And once again, as the embodiment of both stages, of the Versailles stage and of the Munich stage, as the personification of a decrepit ruling oligarchy caught and torn on the spikes of its own impotent lusts, appears the figure of Neville Chamberlain, the architect of the misfortunes of the British people.

IF British and French soldiers have to-day to give their lives before the Siegfried line, their compatriots will do

well to remember that the illegal armed reoccupation of the Rhineland three-and-a-half years ago, and the building of fortifications, in violation of the Versailles Treaty, was carried out with the connivance of the British Government, which vetoed the demand of the French Government for a stand to prevent it, and amid the applause of the *Daily Herald*, which denounced as warmongers those who called for opposition to prevent this preparation of future war at the same time as it denounced the conception of an Anglo-French-Soviet Peace Pact as equivalent to a military alliance and contrary to the principles of collective security. If German submarines to-day sink British ships and kill British sailors, let it be remembered that it was the Anglo-German Naval Pact of 1935 which violated the naval disarmament clauses of Versailles and accorded Germany the special right to build the highest proportion of submarines ("Germany shall have the right to possess a submarine tonnage equal to the total submarine tonnage possessed by the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.").

IN the last war it was considered a sinister demonstration of the rôle of the arms profiteers' international when in isolated cases guns and shells of British manufacture destroyed British lives. But in this war the entire arms machine of the Nazis has been built up in these six years on the basis of the support of British finance. In this connection it is appropriate to recall the statement of the *Stock Exchange Gazette* :

The more pertinent question is : Who finances Germany ? Without this country as a clearing house for payments, and the opportunity to draw on credits under the standstill, Germany could not have pursued her plans. We have been so ready to sell to Germany that the question of payment has never been allowed to interfere with the commercial side The provisioning of the opposing force has been financed in London. (*Stock Exchange Gazette*, May 3, 1935.)

With this may be compared the verdict of the Foreign Editor of the *Financial News* :

There can be no doubt that practically the whole of the free exchange available to Germany for the purchase of raw materials was supplied directly or indirectly by Great Britain.

If the day of reckoning ever comes, the liberal attitude of the British Government in this matter may well be responsible for the lives of British soldiers and civilians.

War material, which will eventually be used against this country, could never have been produced but for the generosity with which Great Britain is giving her enemy free exchange for the purchase of raw materials. (Paul Einzig, *World Finance*, 1938-39.)

When the time comes, these things will not be forgotten in the count of Britain's present ruling class.

IN 1938 Germany received from the British and French Empires 26 per cent. of her supplies of iron ore, 33 per cent. of lead, 50 per cent. of chromium, 62 per cent. of copper, 61 per cent. of manganese, 94 per cent. of nickel, 60 per cent. of zinc and 52 per cent. of rubber. Without these supplies Germany could not have made war. Right up to the very last this building up of German armament supplies from Britain went on. *In the very last month before the war, in August, 1939, the London market was occupied overtime in supplying Germany with war materials :*

Huge German orders for rubber and copper were executed in London yesterday regardless of cost. The buying of nearly 3,000 tons of copper sent the price rocketing 18s. 9d. to £44 18s. 9d. a ton.

Already Germany has bought over 10,000 tons this month in London alone.

The London Rubber Exchange enjoyed almost a record turnover owing to a German order for 4,000 tons. The price shot up 3-16d. to 8½d. a lb. Germany is reported to have bought 17,000 tons already this month—two months' normal consumption. (*News-Chronicle*, August 19, 1939.)

Thus the equipping of the enemy with war materials at an accelerated pace went on to the very eve of war. There could be no clearer indication that up to the very last the ruling circles of British finance-capital calculated on these war materials being used elsewhere.

THE second imperialist war did not begin in September, 1939. It already began years earlier. Its preparation may be traced over the past eight years. Its character was described already in the *History of the C.P.S.U.* in 1938 :

A second imperialist war has actually begun. It began stealthily without any declaration of war. States and nations have almost imperceptibly slipped into the orbit of a second imperialist war. It was the three aggressor States, the fascist ruling circles of Germany, Italy and Japan, that began the war in various parts of the world . . . In the final analysis it is being waged against the capitalist interests of Great Britain, France and the U.S.A., since its object is a redivision of the world and of the spheres of influence in favour of the aggressor countries and at the expense of the so-called democratic States.

A distinguishing feature of the second imperialist war is that so far it is being waged and extended by the aggressor powers, while the other powers, the "democratic" powers, against whom in fact the war is directed, pretend that it does not concern them, wash their hands of it, boast of their love of peace, scold the fascist aggressors, and . . . surrender their positions to the aggressors bit by bit, at the same time asserting that they are preparing to resist.

Similarly we have the description of Stalin in his speech in March, 1939 :

It is a distinguishing feature of the new imperialist war that it has not yet become universal, a world war. The war is being waged by aggressor States, who in every way infringe the interests of the non-aggressive States, primarily England, France and the U.S.A., while the latter draw back and retreat, making concession after concession to the aggressors.

The new fact since September, 1939, is that, following the German aggression on Poland on September 1, Britain and France, after previously refusing a general peace front which could have checked the aggression, have declared war on Germany.

WHAT is the significance of this new step ? Where does it lead, and what must be the conclusions for action to be drawn by the working class and the anti-fascist forces ? We are dealing here with a situation which is not simple, but complex, which is characterised by many contradictory elements, and in which it is evident that the forces have got out of control of the actors and that many sharp turns and changes may be expected. Up to the last stages British and French reaction undoubtedly counted on reaching a settlement with Germany. Poland and the Polish Treaty were originally a pawn in the game : that there was no serious

consideration of the problem of military resistance at the time the Treaty was drawn up by the British Government and by Colonel Beck was shown by the placid rejection of the only help which could have saved Poland, Soviet military help, and by the complete absence of any plan of combined action and the terrible outcome when it came to practice. The warnings of Lloyd George and of Churchill at the time were explicit :

If we are going in (to help Poland) without the help of Russia, we are walking into a trap I ask the Government to take immediate steps to secure the adhesion of Russia, an alliance, an agreement, a pact—it does not matter what it is called, so long as it is an understanding to stand together against the aggressor. Apart from that, we have undertaken a frightful gamble, a very risky gamble. (Lloyd George in the House of Commons, April 3, 1939.)

He (Chamberlain) guaranteed Poland, Rumania and Greece against the huge army of Germany. I was the first to call attention to that obvious fact in the House of Commons. I denounced it as sheer madness to give such a pledge in the absence of military support from Russia Russian troops alone could reach the battlefield in time to save the Polish Army from being crushed. (Lloyd George in the *Sunday Express*, July 27, 1939.)

There is no means of maintaining an Eastern Front against Nazi aggression without the active aid of Russia. (Churchill in the *Daily Telegraph*, May 4, 1939.)

These warnings of the Spring of 1939, which became terrible reality in the Autumn, were not a secret ; they were spoken from the housetops. The fact that these warnings were ignored is evidence that there was no serious expectation of a conflict ; the guarantees were a form of diplomatic pressure on Germany ; the certainty of a deal with Germany, including a German-Polish settlement, was assumed. Hence also the placid acceptance of the Nazi military occupation of Danzig and the pressure on Poland to make no opposition. It became evident, when the British Military Mission reached Moscow, that the problem of military resistance was not being considered as a practical problem, and that between the Soviet authorities, who were considering it as a serious strategic problem, and the British authorities there was no common ground. The financial oligarchies were only playing, as they thought, with diplomatic pawns. But the diplomatic pawns

were the lives of nations.

THE same situation and calculations—or miscalculations—were clearly shown in the character of the negotiations with the Soviet Union. There was neither any conception of urgency, nor any serious intention to reach a Peace Front. Had there been either, the offer of the Soviet Union for a firm and binding reciprocal Peace Pact would have been immediately closed with, as soon as it was made, instead of being first ignored, then repudiated on principle (Chamberlain in April), and then played with through every device ingenuity could invent for delay. It is evident that the intention here also was to use the negotiations as a diplomatic bluff, in order to exercise pressure on Germany to reach an agreement by the threat of a possible alternative. Meanwhile the serious approaches and negotiations with Germany went forward (Hudson-Wohltat, Kemsley-Hitler, etc.), until the situation was considered ripe for the conception of the Five Power Conference, excluding the Soviet Union, to be publicly launched in the British press. During all this period the Nazi military preparations went openly forward. It was known that mid-August would see the completion of the Nazi mobilisation. Yet this knowledge produced no sense of urgency in British ruling circles for the necessity of building an immediate front to meet the menace of aggression. On the contrary, as late as August 3 the British Minister of Defence (!) placidly declared that “War is unlikely—and the Government has very good reasons for saying that.” They were very confident of their plan for the second Munich. They were very confident that the Nazi mobilisation would be directed elsewhere. They were very confident that they had the poor Soviet simpletons on a string. Unfortunately for themselves, they did not realise that they were not dealing with Blums and Attlees, but with men who understood every move of the “big and dangerous game” the Munichites were playing and the “serious fiasco” to which it would lead.

WITH massive patience the Soviet Union waited till the very extreme edge of risk and danger, till the second half of August, not because they failed to understand

the manœuvres of Chamberlain (the successive warnings of Molotov and Zhdanov were sharp and open), but to give the utmost chance to the forces in Britain which wished for a Pact to awaken from their daydreams to the real menace and to compel the Peace Front which could alone save peace. But the official opposition forces in Britain remained fatuously complacent and passive, noisily proclaiming every few days that the Peace Pact was just about to be reached (which was exactly what Chamberlain wanted them to do), trusting Chamberlain, refusing to lift a finger against Chamberlain, refusing to unite, elaborately discussing the terms of a deal with Hitler "after" the Peace Front instead of fighting for the Peace Front. When the British Military Mission to Moscow, at the very moment of Hitler's full mobilisation, made clear that they had not the slightest intention of even discussing any common action, the Soviet Union drew the necessary conclusions and took immediate steps to meet the situation. It was no longer possible to save general peace by a Peace Front, when the Peace Front was refused by the Governments of the West, and the Western peoples proved incapable of checking the sabotage of their Governments. It was not possible to save the doomed and passive peoples of the West against their will. It was necessary to find an alternative path to break the counter-revolutionary front. On August 23 the Soviet Union signed the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany. The reactionary plans of Chamberlain were smashed with a single blow.

FROM this point the fiasco of Chamberlainism was manifest to the world. The refusal of the Peace Front recoiled on the heads of the non-interventionists. From the moment that Hitler was clear that Chamberlain had finally refused the Peace Front, he knew that he could strike his blow. The Munichites, the British reactionaries who refused the Peace Front and let loose catastrophe upon the world, now try to hide their guilt and to claim that the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact let loose Hitler's attack. This is like claiming that, because the thunder follows the lightning, the flash is the cause of the thunder. Hitler's mobilisation was

reaching its height already by mid-August. The blow was visibly preparing. Only the immediate conclusion of the Peace Front could have checked it. The Soviet military authorities put forward the most urgent and concrete proposals for action to check it. These proposals were refused. From the moment of that refusal the fate of Western and Central Europe was sealed. *The refusal of the Peace Front by Chamberlain led equally to the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact and to Hitler's attack. The two consequences followed from a single cause.* The blood-guilt cannot be escaped. The responsibility for this war lies not only with Hitler, the direct aggressor and launcher of the war, but with British and French reaction who could have checked the aggression without war and who refused, thereby choosing the path of war.

BY their own act the British and French reactionaries had left themselves with no choice save to surrender their entire imperialist position or to fight. For two whole days after Hitler's armies had invaded Poland, Chamberlain was still seeking for the way out from the dilemma in which he had caught himself. He was still seeking for his dream of a Munich that had vanished from the chessboard. He was looking for something that was not there. The angry scene in the House of Commons on the night of September 2, and the hastily precipitated ultimatum of the following morning, was only the final expression of his bankruptcy. Those two days had only served to give time for the Nazi ships to reach port and for the Nazi U boats to take position on the high seas. This was the final gift of Chamberlain to the British people on the eve of war. Those who would not fight with the well-appointed armies and overwhelming power of the European peace system at its height ("for fear of war," "a stand might mean war,"), those who would not fight for democracy in Spain or Czechoslovakia, those who would not fight with the fortified bastion of Czechoslovakia to check the advance and with the overwhelming power of the Soviet Union to determine the issue, had now to fight with the ramshackle fascist State of Poland as their only ally, and had

in consequence to bring in the final analysis the British and French peoples in isolation to face the Nazi military machine. Such was the outcome of the diplomacy of a Chamberlain.

NOW that the war is here, under the conditions of Chamberlain's choosing, not of our choosing, what course must the British and French peoples, what course must the working-class fighters against fascism pursue? Though it is a war against Hitler, the spearhead of international reaction and the deadly enemy of the international labour movement, the fact must be faced that it is an imperialist war. This war is not the war of the Peace Front against fascist aggression ; for the Peace Front was never realised ; the realisation of the Peace Front would have meant, not war, but peace. The British and French reactionaries are not fighting for democracy against fascism ; or they would have stood by Spain and Czechoslovakia. They are not fighting for the freedom of small nations, or for the sanctity of treaties, or for the maintenance of peace against aggression. They have trampled all these principles under foot and shown in practice that they have no care for them. They are fighting for their own imperialist interests and for nothing else. They are fighting because the further advance of Hitler-fascism, to the domination of Europe, to the south-east and to the Middle Eastern Empire, and to the demand for colonies, threatens the vital interests of British imperialism. They are fighting for the maintenance of the British Empire against a rival imperialism. And even after they have formally declared war, they still seek for a way out, for a basis of settlement that could divert the imperialist war, whose deadly menace to their whole system they well understand, into the channels of counter-revolutionary war. They use the slogans of anti-fascism for their own dirty aims. They will pursue the war for their imperialist aims to reach an imperialist peace. On all these harsh realities there is no room for illusions.

THE standpoint of the working class and of the democratic anti-fascists in relation to this war must be an independent standpoint, irreconcilably opposed to that of

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the imperialists. This is the first elementary condition for approaching correctly the tasks of the working class in the war. The working class cannot allow itself to be tied up with the aims of imperialism. It would be an obvious error to apply the conceptions of the Peace Front to this type of war which has arisen solely because of the refusal of the Peace Front by British imperialism. Since the collapse of the aim of the Peace Front, through the failure of the Western democratic movements, and the consequent alternative path of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact, we have entered into a completely new international political situation in which it would be self-destructive blindness to endeavour to operate with conceptions belonging to conditions which have vanished. We need to face the new situation, which will require the most careful review of all problems by the working-class movement. With merciless realism the working-class leadership of the Soviet Union has faced the new situation and seen how to utilise it to advance the interests of world socialism. The working-class movements of Western and Central Europe will need to face the situation, and the sharp problems raised by the war, with no less realism and audacity in defining their tasks and seeing the historical rôle which falls to them in the present developing situation.

WE need to analyse with especial care the world rôle of British imperialism in the present situation, in determining our policy. The previous main counter-revolutionary front against the Soviet Union, with German Fascism as its spearhead, and organising the combination of the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact, has received a decisive set-back. The advance of the Red Army holds the Nazi advance in Eastern Europe in check. But with this shift of forces, the rôle of British imperialism undergoes a corresponding evolution. The violent anti-Soviet crusade, especially in the Liberal-Labour press, at the very moment when the Red Army came to the rescue of the peoples in Western Byelorussia, Western Ukraine and Eastern Poland, is an ominous sign. Under these conditions Greenwood's demand for the "resurrection of Poland" (without distinction of

what Poland) becomes a demand, not for national liberation, but for aggressive war against the Soviet Union in order to re-establish a semi-fascist dictatorship over national minorities which were originally torn away by a brigand expedition and have now been liberated, not only nationally, but socially. "The French-British war aims include the reconstitution of Poland, which affects the Soviet Government" (*Times*, September 23, 1939). The propaganda against Nazi-ism is increasingly turned into propaganda against "dictatorship" in general. This issue affects, not only the question of the Soviet Union, but also the development of the revolution in Central Europe. What is meant by the only officially proclaimed war aim, alongside the "restoration of Poland," the "overthrow of Hitlerism?" No answer is vouchsafed. In fact the overthrow of the Hitler régime is the task, not of military action to impose from without a new régime on the German people, but of the German people. But the ambiguous phrase can be used to cover the aggressive aims of British imperialism, and the determination to impose a new form of reactionary régime in order to strangle the German popular revolution. The struggle against all imperialist war aims now becomes of the greatest importance. The aims of the aggressive imperialist elements, who steer their course towards a super-Versailles, in fact, by the very menace of such aims, strengthen the hold of fascist dictatorship on the German people.

THE official policy of the Labour Party of complete war-time collaboration with the Chamberlain Government, through the thinly veiled coalition form of "liaisons" with the Ministries, and proclamation of a "political truce," is fatal to the interests of the working-class movement and of the British people. It is the repetition of 1914. The first task of the working-class movement is to establish its independence of imperialism and of imperialist war aims, to end the collaboration with Chamberlain and re-establish its freedom of movement. The struggle needs to be waged against the new attacks on the working people against high prices and profiteering, against the economic offensive of the em-

ployers on labour standards and conditions, and against the reactionary measures through which it is being attempted to prepare the conditions for fascism here. Only a strong, independent and militant working-class movement can defend the interests of the workers against these attacks. But this social and economic struggle is inseparably bound up with political independence of programme and aims in relation to imperialism and the question of the war. These issues will inevitably deepen as the war proceeds. The struggle needs to be directed to the establishment of a new Government, representative of the masses of the people, and completely freed from imperialist elements and aims. The problems before the working-class movement are sharp and urgent. But the dilemmas of the imperialists are a hundred times greater. They can neither find their solution in peace nor in war. The Soviet Union grows immeasurably stronger. The basis of the fascist dictatorships is being undermined. Explosive situations develop in all the belligerent countries. The colonial peoples stir against their bonds and see before them new possibilities of advancing their struggle for liberation. The second imperialist war is the historical signal for mass awakening in the countries of Europe and in all the colonial countries, and for new advance to the goal of world socialism.

R. P. D.

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Strategic Aspects of the War

BY “STRATEGIST” *

GERMAN FASCISM HAS been conducting aggressive war for almost six years. This war has so far been conducted by diplomatic means, by threats and blackmail and by propaganda and intrigues, developing into acts of violence which have been diplomatically carefully prepared and shrewdly executed. The strategic aims of German Fascism—liquidation of the Treaty of Versailles and the struggle for economic and political hegemony in Europe—have not changed in the six years between the withdrawal from the League of Nations in November, 1933, and the invasion of Poland. The tactical methods, however, have differed.

By offering its services through the Anti-Comintern Pact to the capitalist governments of Western Europe, German Fascism got rid of the military restrictions of the Versailles Treaty and began to build up the powerful war-machine with which it blackmailed the guarantors of Austrian and Czechoslovakian independence. Intervening openly along with Italy in General Franco's rebellion against the Spanish Republican Government, it threatened the communications of Britain and France with their colonies and altered the balance of power in the Mediterranean.

With the promise not to make further territorial claims, coupled with the threat to launch a European war, German Fascism lured the representatives of Britain and France, who wanted at that time to maintain the Fascist régime in Germany, against the will of their peoples, into the Munich Agreement, which dismembered Czechoslovakia and destroyed their strategical defence lines in Central Europe. Six months later German troops marched into Prague, and Czechoslovakia ceased to be an independent State.

There was still time to check the Fascist aggressor. The Soviet Union suggested an international conference to form a peace bloc, which would have formed a barrier against any further acts of violence and aggression. This proposal was refused by the British and French governments, which guaranteed, without the Soviet Union, the independence of Poland, the next objective of German aggression. Later the negotiations featuring Mr. Strang began at Moscow, followed by the Franco-British staff talks with the Soviet delegation, led by Marshal Voroshilov. Neither of these had any result, as the Polish

*The writer is a former Staff Officer of the Army of the Spanish Republic.

government refused Russian military help.

This imprudent attitude of the dominant military caste in Poland, who certainly acted upon the advice of the British and French governments, changed the political and strategical position in Europe. The conclusion of an Anglo-French-Soviet anti-aggression pact would have firmly guaranteed the independence of the Polish people and prevented the war. Poland, however, isolated itself strategically from its western guarantors by refusing the powerful assistance of the Red Army and practically encouraged the German aggression against her territory.

The Soviet Union tried her best to save peace and accepted the German proposition of a non-aggression pact, foreseeing that the sudden change in Hitler's former policy would badly shake the Axis. The immediate result of the pact was a certain change in Japan's policy, which found herself isolated in front of the Soviet Union and immediately began to change her attitude to Great Britain in the Far East. Italy and Spain were completely surprised and began gradually to improve their relations with the western democratic powers.

Hitler was faced with the alternative : either to abandon his plan of aggression or to provoke the war, as under the pressure of the British and French people, Chamberlain and Daladier maintained their guarantees to Poland. He decided for war and launched a carefully-prepared blow against Polish independence.

This war will not be conducted under anything like easy conditions. Engels states in *Anti-Dühring* that "the whole organisation and method of fighting armies and along with these victory or defeat prove to be dependent on material, that is, economic conditions : on the human material, and therefore on the quality and quantity of the population and on technical development."

How do these fundamental conditions apply to the forces opposed to each other in this war ? Certainly the German war-machine is very powerful and skilfully run ; the probable war strength of the German army is estimated at a total of 300 Divisions, including 20 motorised divisions and 10 cavalry divisions, 10,500 tanks and 9,000 aeroplanes.

The modern German infantry division is heavily armed. It has at its disposal 457 machine guns, 72 anti-tank guns and 24 mortars. Divisional artillery is to be increased to two full regiments, one light and one heavy, with a total of 72 guns. The heavy artillery regiments have one horse and one motorised company, each one consisting of one battery of 105 mm. guns and one of 150 mm. howitzers. The range of the light artillery is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles ; that of the heavy between 10 and 12 miles.

The fire power and mobility of the modern German division is very strong and represents a synthesis of all arms for defensive and offensive fire. Its mobile, quick-firing artillery forms, with the infantry units, one strong fighting unit. Its organisation is designed for rapid movement and manœuvre.

The German armoured divisions consist of a tank brigade of 500 tanks, a motorised rifle brigade and a motorised regiment of artillery. At the beginning of 1938 the German army had at its disposal five of these armoured divisions, besides four light motorised divisions with about 1,000 tanks, about 2,000 further tanks attached to infantry units and a reserve of about 1,000 tanks, making a total of 6,500 tanks. At least 3,000 tanks have been constructed in the meantime and the armoured divisions are probably doubled.

German military experts consider the tank as an independent offensive arm, unlike French opinion, which regards it chiefly as a supplementary weapon of infantry units. Tanks, according to the German regulations, will be used without close connection with the infantry, which advances too slowly. The speed of the infantry will be adapted to that of the tanks by the formation of motorised infantry units to follow the tanks in their attempts to conduct decisive breaking-through operations.

Another powerful and modern weapon of the German army is the air force, whose first line strength was estimated in October, 1938, at between 4,500 and 5,000 planes. As a result of the greatly increased production, approximately 8,000 planes of the most modern models should now be in service.

The productive basis of the German aircraft industry is highly centralised and is concentrated in a comparatively small number of very big factories with an extremely high level of productive capacity. The technique of mass production has been thoroughly mastered and the various troubles through rapid growth and development of the past years are overcome. This could be observed in Spain, where the German planes of 1936 were inferior to the Italian planes, while by 1938 the German machines proved better than the Italian.

The weakest spot in the technically powerful German army is its lack of trained reserves. The total number of full and half-trained reserves is estimated at about 4,500,000, including 900,000 men who have gone through the army and the police. 1,800,000 men who were trained during the world war, belong to older classes, men of 39 and over who are generally not suitable for service at the front. The remaining reserves consist of half-trained men, mostly members of the National-Socialist organisations, who received some training in the S.A. and S.S.

Still worse is the lack of cadres of trained officers. Here lies the biggest weakness of the German army. Actually the German army has at its disposal 25,000 officers, while the much smaller French army has 27,000. The reason for this shortage of officers is that the period in which Germany's rearmament was carried through was too short to permit the formation of highly trained cadres of military experts. It takes at least four years to train an officer for General Staff service.

This powerful war-machine, equipped with the latest models of military technique in machine-guns, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guns, artillery, tanks and aeroplanes with a man-power reserve of 12 million, fit for service after a certain training period, has at its disposal a war industry with a production capacity equal to that of England and France together. Austrian and Czech skilled labour, which is not used as military man-power for political reasons, is available to replace conscripted German workers. Means of production and labour are available to continue the pre-war production, especially as many of the important factories have been removed to safe zones.

Germany, however, is short of many of the essential raw materials for war production and does not possess the necessary gold to buy them. Captain Liddell Hart gives in his book, *The Defence of Britain*, the following list of some twenty basic products essential for war. "Coal for general production. Petroleum for motive power. Cotton for explosives. Wool. Iron. Rubber for transport. Copper for general armaments and all electrical equipment. Nickel for steel making and ammunition. Lead for ammunition. Glycerine for dynamite. Cellulose for smokeless powders. Mercury for detonators. Aluminium and bauxite for aircraft. Antimony, manganese for steel making and metallurgy in general. Asbestos for guns and machinery. Mica for its flexibility. Nitric acid and sulphur, both for explosives."

Germany only possesses sufficient coal to meet all necessities, but must employ a considerable amount of skilled labour to keep up with full-speed and full-capacity production. She is further relatively rich in iron ores but will be obliged to import them as during the world war from Sweden, with which country the sea communications across the Baltic can easily be maintained. The crude petroleum production of Germany is insignificant, but about one-third of her petrol needs are covered by home-produced synthetic fuel, naturally at much greater cost. Even the total output of Rumania's petrol production, would not have been sufficient for the requirements of Germany's industry and army during a war. Germany has no rubber, but she has provided a fifth of her peace-time requirements by means of an artificial substitute. She meets a part of her need for wool by some new "ersatz." The German supplies of copper, antimony, manganese, nickel and sulphur are very inadequate. She depends for these needs almost entirely on large-scale import. Germany completely lacks cotton, tin, bauxite, mercury and mica.

An effective blockade by the Anglo-French navies, combined with a severe control of the foreign imports of Italy, Yugoslavia, Rumania, Belgium, Holland and the Scandinavian and Baltic states should make it impossible for the raw materials essential for war to enter Germany in considerable quantities. Her almost complete lack of gold reserves and her inability to export on a large scale will in any event prevent her from buying these basic products within a relatively short time.

Considering the restrictions on food which are now in existence and the possibilities of buying food or exchanging agricultural products from Yugoslavia, Hungary and Rumania, Germany might be able to hold out for several years upon restricted rations.

In order to conduct a war one of the most essential conditions is the existence of a sound hinterland—that is, a population which is willing to endure bombardments, black-out restrictions, lack of food, light and heating and to sacrifice the lives of sons, husbands and brothers for the war. This is only possible when the population supports the objective of the war. The war of German Fascism against Poland and the democratic peoples has not such an aim. The majority of the German people do not know for what they fight and suffer. They only know that this war is Hitler's war. They were against the annexation of Austria and the occupation of Czechoslovakia. They do not approve of the invasion of Poland. They do not hate the English and French people. They want to live in peace.

Hitler Fascism has not succeeded in crushing the twelve million former Socialist and Communist voters and the democratic and intellectual opposition, in spite of the terror of the Gestapo, of prisons and concentration camps and of many thousands of assassinations and executions. The German opposition, connected by many underground threads with its representatives abroad, lives and works for the downfall of Hitler and his criminal régime. The first strikes have taken place in Germany. The more difficult conditions become, the more the underground movement grows and becomes a danger for the Fascist system. Hitler knows it, and the full powers for Himmler and the Gestapo on the so-called internal front prove that German Fascism fears the German opposition behind the front and its connections within the army.

On these economic, political and military conditions German strategy is built. The actual leaders of Germany know very well that they cannot stand a long war. The economic, financial and political situation does not allow it. German strategy must aim at a short war and a quick military decision. The full power of the armoured divisions, the whole strength of the air force, the mobility and fire power of artillery and infantry must be utilised in the first months of the war in order to crush the victim of aggression and to try to get an advantageous peace before the lack of raw materials and gold and the struggle of the anti-fascist opposition, reinforced by millions of dissatisfied people, breaks up the régime. A war of several years means the end of German Fascism.

This strategy is applied against the Polish people and the Polish state. Before investigating the practical application of the German strategy and its methods during the actual campaign in Poland, it will be necessary to analyse the Polish war potential and the conditions of the Polish state.

In spite of her geographical position—and since the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Germany she is half encircled by German territory with a narrow outlet to the Baltic, flanked by the German provinces of Pomerania and East Prussia—Poland had a favourable strategic position against Germany within a coalition which included the Soviet Union. French and British assistance to Poland can only be indirect and depends on strong diversional operations on the Western Front. She could only conduct a successful war against Germany if she had the economic and military support of the Soviet Union. An alliance with the Soviet Union would have meant a double advantage to Poland. She would have been able to defend her frontiers, including the Corridor and the important port of Gdynia, against a German attack. Her favourable strategic position with a wedge into German territory would have been of tremendous importance for launching, in combination with the Red Army, an offensive against Germany which would have immediately threatened Berlin.

Unfortunately the Polish rulers decided otherwise and refused, apparently upon advice from London and Paris, the offer of support from the Soviet Union. They have paid dearly for this fundamental strategical error. Either they under-estimated the formidable strength of the German war technique, or they over-estimated the possibilities of large-scale diversional operations on land and by air on the Western Front.

The peace-time force of the Polish army was 30 infantry divisions and 15 cavalry brigades. Its war-footing could be estimated as between 60 and 70 divisions, as Poland with her 38 million inhabitants had at her disposal a formidable reserve of man-power, but not industrial capacity and raw materials to arm them sufficiently. The technical basis of the Polish army was very weak. The lack of finance which the country suffered made it impossible to build up an independent heavy industry and to produce sufficient war material to mechanise and modernise the army and its armament.

During the past four years Poland produced only 700 light and medium tanks as well as 500 tankettes. The whole strength of the Polish Tank Corps might be estimated at 1,100 tanks, 1,200 tankettes and 700 armoured cars. Not a single division was motor-mechanised. Not all divisions even had tank units attached.

The Polish air force was relatively small on account of the limited capacity of the Polish aircraft industry, which in 1938 produced between 800 and 1,000 planes. The Polish air arm consisted of about 1,800 machines of which only about 1,000 were first-line planes. It was not fit for offensive air operations, but its possibilities for an effective air defence were also very limited.

Besides the weaknesses of the Polish air force and tank arm, whose strengths were about one-tenth of the German army on war footing, the infantry and artillery were short of the latest offensive armament

of modern armies. On the other hand the Polish cavalry corps was very strong, but its military value was not very great as it had been regarded as a substitute for motorisation and not a supplement to motorisation.

A French military publication, *Le Document*, with a preface by General Weygand, the former military adviser to the Polish General Staff, pronounced in 1938 a quite pessimistic verdict on the Polish army :

Polish armament is weak, and it is to be feared that in the event of mobilisation, the equipment of the reserves will be still weaker. Polish industry has only very limited possibilities. In consequence the leaders of the army rely on endurance, training and intelligence of their troops and concentrate too much on the factor of manoeuvre without paying sufficient attention to the factor of fire-power. This is particularly so in regard to the Polish cavalry . . . Owing to lack of finance there has been no motorisation of the army, and there are very few tanks available.

Polish war industry, mostly situated west of the Vistula, had at its disposal the highly-industrialised regions of the former German Upper Silesia around Katowice and the Lodz district. She was independent of coal imports, but obliged to import the greater part of the other basic raw materials and depended entirely on the maintenance of the communications to the Baltic and the Black Sea. Part of Poland's petrol needs were covered by the production of the Carpathian wells in the Stanislawow district, but she had to import additional petroleum either from Rumania or the Soviet Union.

The internal political situation of Poland was not at all satisfactory. There was neither national nor political unity. Besides the strong German minority in the western provinces of Poland, who during the last years enjoyed all civic liberties and lately were without any justification stirred up by German Fascist propaganda, there were in Eastern Poland big national minorities of Ukrainians and White Russians who had always been severely repressed by the Central Government in Warsaw.

Poland could not be regarded as a fully democratic country. Some workers' organisations were banned and the few remaining ones subjected to many restrictions. The Communist Party of Poland, champion of the struggle of the Polish people for independence and democratic liberties, had been prohibited for a long period. Even in the dangerous situation during the last days of August, the Polish Government did not utilise the services and extensive war experience of more than one thousand former Polish volunteers of the International Brigade.

The unity of all democratic and anti-fascist forces in a country is one of the most important pre-requisites for the successful conduct of a war of national independence against a Fascist aggressor. Only the strong unity of the Spanish Popular Front enabled the Government of Dr. Negrin to hold out for two and a half years against the material superiority of the German and Italian invasion and the strong man-power of General Franco's armies. Poland lacks national and

political homogeneity. This regrettable fact represented a further weakness in the strategic position of Poland.

The shock of the German invading armies was bound under these conditions to lead to catastrophic consequences. Economic, geographical, political and military facts militated against a successful defence of Polish territory. There is no question that some units of the Polish army, the garrisons of the Westerplatte, of Gdynia, of the Corridor and of Warsaw have fought with admirable courage against the powerful war machine of German Fascism. The Polish cavalry showed in its audacious raids into East Prussia and German Silesia the old spirit of its glorious tradition but was unable to change the general strategic situation. The Polish air force, six or eight times inferior to Goering's squadrons, sacrificed its best men to defend Polish towns and Polish children against the mighty Junker bombers and the much quicker and more mobile Messerschmidt fighters.

Undoubtedly the Fifth Column too was working within the staffs and organisation centres of the Polish army. Several surprising German successes, like the capture of Cracow, where the bridges over the Vistula were not blown up by the Poles, or the first crossing of the Narew at Lomsza, can only be explained by treason or deliberate negligence.

The main reasons for the rapid collapse of Poland's defence and her army, which proved unable to defend the natural line of the rivers Narew, Bug, Vistula and San and so became the prey of the German pincer movement, whose claws were moving simultaneously from the north and the south into Central Poland, are as follows :

There were practically no prepared defence lines along the Polish-German border. The defence of the Carpathian passes on the Slovakian border was insufficient, and the natural line of the Vistula River system had not been converted into some form of a Polish Maginot Line. The responsibility for neglecting the defence of Poland is undoubtedly that of Colonel Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister, who was still conspiring with German Fascism when it destroyed the independence of the Czechoslovakian Republic.

Because of the reasons outlined earlier, the Polish army was unable to cope with the overwhelming force of the invading German armies. The Polish defence had to yield before the full weight of the German armoured divisions, which over-ran, out-fired and out-maneuvred the Polish infantry divisions. The motor-mechanised German divisions have proved to be a tremendous offensive weapon, when opposed to troops with inferior armament, and were skilfully conducted. It is a fact that the normal German divisions did not have the same surprising successes. They were held up by the Polish defenders between Lodz, Kutno and Warsaw, in spite of their superiority in fire power. Had the Polish High Command withdrawn its troops earlier behind a well-fortified Vistula river system and not sacrificed their best troops

between Lodz and Warsaw, the possibilities of holding out for a longer period would probably have been greater.

By reason of its small size, the Polish Air Force was not able to conduct an offensive against the German Air Fleet and immediately lost control of the air. After the first days of the war losses of planes were so high that it was unable to protect even the infantry and communications against low-flying planes. German aviation could thus bombard ruthlessly the front-line troops, as well as reserves, railroads, bridges and roads in the hinterland. The tremendous superiority of the German Air Force and its continuous bombardment and machine-gunning in many cases caused considerable panic among the Polish troops and thus facilitated the rapid advance of the German columns.

The very slow progress of the operations on the Western Front, where on account of the German Western fortifications and its deep defence lines objective difficulties exist, allowed the German High Command to keep their main forces in the East. It is, however, incomprehensible that the Anglo-French air forces never raided the important war factories of the Rhine and Ruhr valley. An energetic air war in the West would have obliged the German Air Command to withdraw the majority of their planes from Poland, which would have considerably slowed up the German advance.

With the collapse of the Polish army and the Polish state the war has entered its second phase, in which economic and political conditions will play a still greater part than in Poland. Blockade, U boat warfare, control of the neutral imports, the attitude of the doubtful neutrals such as Italy and Spain, the policy of the Soviet Union, developments in the internal policy of Britain and France, Germany's economic situation and the struggle of the German opposition, will play a very important rôle in the war. These conditions and the strategic aspects of the war in the West will be dealt with in a second article.

The Soviet Union and the War

BY * * *

THE SECOND WORLD war has grown from a creeping flame into a fiery furnace, covering the greater part of the world's population. In the Italo-Abyssinian war of 1935—since when war has been continuous in the world, and always on the initiative of the Fascist-Nazi aggressor *bloc*—there were 50 millions of people involved. By 1936, with the addition of the German-Italian war on Republican Spain, there were 145 millions involved. From 1937 onwards into 1938, when Japan resumed aggression against China, the number of people drawn into war exceeded 500 millions. In 1939, with the entry of the German, French and British Empires and of Poland into armed conflict, no less than 1,300 millions of the world's population of 2,100 millions have been drawn into what is unmistakably the second world war. As the Communists always predicted, from their analysis of the causes and motive forces of the war developing since 1935, it is not merely Imperialist appetites on the part of the several capitalist Great Powers that have landed the world in this catastrophe ; it is the encouragement given to Nazi-Fascist aggression by the British and French Governments, for class reasons peculiar to the present period of world history, that has brought the world into war.

For this war bears a special character in several ways, all of them springing from the one basic fact which Lenin and Stalin have repeatedly pointed out—that this is an epoch of wars and revolutions in full blast, so to speak, an epoch of which the first world war of 1914-18 was only the opening. One special characteristic is that German Imperialism bears a special character, which it did not bear in 1914, and which is of special importance to the workers of the world—the character of Fascism. A second characteristic is that British and French Imperialism, which are fighting Hitler for their class purposes had the chance of stopping the war and driving Hitler back, which they deliberately rejected—for the same class purposes—in refusing the help of the U.S.S.R. A third special characteristic, unknown to the previous world war, is the existence of a Socialist Great Power, with its own policy and part to play, and with a strength, taking moral as well as material factors together, superior to that of any other Great Power in the world.

In order to understand the part played, and to be played, by the Soviet Union in this war, let us briefly consider the position of the

principal forces aligned on either side.

In the first place, there is German Fascism or Nazi-ism. About its class character there can be no doubt : it is the most savage, the most barbarous, the most retrograde expression of capitalist dictatorship over the people, and over the working class in particular, and represents the very greatest danger for mankind. Anyone who claims to be a Marxist, and indeed anyone who understands anything about politics, must be able to distinguish between the position of the workers under such a régime and under that of bourgeois democracy. Furthermore, the aggression against Poland, prepared and launched on lines made familiar for the last two years, is only the latest link in a long chain of aggressions which the class-conscious workers of all countries have for years struggled to stop. But there is more than accident in the fact that the British ruling class favoured the previous aggressions of Hitlerism—against Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Lithuania—and thereby brought down the present war upon the world. The German ruling classes had suffered bankruptcy in the first world war, and were saved in 1919-20 from the German people by the combined efforts of German Social Democracy, which headed the German Government, and of the Allied Powers, who winked at the formation of counter-revolutionary officers' battalions, illegal terrorist detachments, " Black Reichswehr," etc., on which the German Social Democrats relied to crush the still immature revolutionary leadership of the German people—the Spartacists. These same forces later elbowed the Social Democrats out of the way, and laid the foundations of Nazism, to which the German ruling class was able to turn in 1932-33, when it grew fearful of proletarian revolution in Germany. Thus German Nazism is not only weaker than the Kaiser régime of 1914 because it has, boiling-up constantly under its savage repressions, the threat of revolution : it is also weaker because it exists by the good grace of Anglo-French imperialism. Perhaps the most striking symbol of its weakness was the haste with which it grasped the opportunity to sign a pact of non-aggression with the U.S.S.R., when the opportunity presented itself, without regard to the heavy blow it was dealing to its own cause in the diplomatic and political spheres.

On the other side there stand Britain and France. The British and French peoples, in resisting Nazi aggression, are actuated by the aim to fight for the preservation, both of the national independence of a series of smaller peoples, and for a setback to the force that menaces every partial democratic liberty won by generations of struggle against their ruling classes. But things are different when we turn to the ruling capitalist class in each of these countries. Not only is the capitalist class of Britain and France no different in its character from what it was in 1914—imperialist and reactionary, gorged with the plunder of colonial peoples numbering hundreds of millions—but, as was just pointed out, it bears a direct responsibility for the continued existence of a

German capitalist class, for the encouragement of its expansionist aims and Fascist policy, and even for creating the world crisis of 1938-39 which found a vent in the European War. So habitual had become its search for a compromise with Hitler, at someone else's expense, that the British Government in the crisis was actually lagging behind the opinion of the class it represented, and on the night of September 2-3 was actually forced into warlike resistance to Nazi aggression by a rebellious House of Commons. Why the duality of attitude? Because of its fear and hatred of the Soviet Union. The course of the Moscow negotiations was a vivid illustration of this contradiction of purposes—fear of the Soviet Union paralysed action against aggression which threatened the vital interests of British and French imperialism itself. As Molotov put it in his speech at the Supreme Council of the U.S.S.R. :

On the one hand, the British and French Governments fear aggression, and for that reason they would like to have a pact of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union providing it helped to strengthen them—Great Britain and France. But on the other hand, the British and French Governments are afraid that the conclusion of a real pact of mutual assistance with the U.S.S.R. may strengthen our country, the Soviet Union—which, it appears, does not answer their purpose. It must be admitted that these fears of theirs outweighed other considerations.

A striking illustration of how these fears still outweigh other considerations has been the frenzied attack of the French Government on the Communist Party of France, the acknowledged leader of millions of French men and women, particularly of such decisive sections of the French working class as the engineers, iron and steel workers and railwaymen.

The contradiction between the feeling of the peoples and the opposite position of their ruling classes was even more remarkably exemplified in the case of Poland. The Polish people had every right and justification to fight for their national independence against the most mediæval and inhuman form of national oppression, little removed from personal slavery, which Hitler reserves for subject races both in his book *Mein Kampf* and in actual practice. But the Polish State was a machinery whereby a small class of half-feudal landowners, corrupt merchants and factory owners enjoying powers over the workers resembling those described by Marx and Engels halfway through last century, controlled 20 million Polish peasants and workmen and 11 million members of national minorities—White Russian, Ukrainian, Czech—most of them peasants, and most of them without any political rights. This ruling class, fearing its own people and its own national minorities, for years made common cause with Hitler in diplomacy and politics, supporting his colonial demands, tolerating the Nazification of Danzig, helping actively to sabotage the work of the League of Nations, joining in the disruption of Czechoslovakia last year, and even at the last extremity refusing the aid of

the Red Army against Hitler. This State broke up under impact from the immense technical superiority of the German war machine, as it was bound to : not because its own war machine was more backward, as the British correspondents who watched the war have put on record, but—deeper than that—because there was no unified national morale to make good technical deficiencies. The end of the Pilsudski Polish State does not mean the end of the Polish people. But the first necessity for their future advance is a far-reaching democratic revolution in Poland itself, based on Poland's greatest need—an agrarian revolution—but searching out every nook and cranny of the rotten political structure as well.

Italy has so far maintained neutrality, and if anything has drawn away from Germany. Thereby the Fascist Government has given yet a further convincing proof that the so-called Axis was based on the temporary community of interests of bandits and highway robbers, not on any common "ideology"—the very word is really in contradiction to the practice and nature of Fascism. So long as Baldwin's opposition to oil sanctions favoured the enterprise against Abyssinia, and Chamberlain's blockade of Republican Spain favoured Franco, Mussolini found his interests in aggression promoted by a kind of blackmailers' *bloc* with Hitler. But directly the eclipse of the German-Japanese alliance left Japan alone, face to face with the U.S.S.R. as well as with the Chinese people, the British Fleet was released from any necessity of large concentration in the Far East, and could attend to matters nearer home. The protection of British interests in the Mediterranean once more became one of its principal occupations. From that moment it could not suit Mussolini's convenience to intervene on the side of Hitler. That moment might yet come again, if Hitler wins any far-reaching success in the west. But equally, should Hitler fail and begin to weaken, Mussolini is free to repeat the gesture of 1915, and to come into the war on the side of the Allies, at a suitable price.

Japan, too, was emboldened in its attacks on China only by the openly-expressed encouragement of important sections of the British capitalist class, exemplified by the *Times*. Both British capitalism and Hitler encouraged it to add to its adventures the long drawn-out war against the U.S.S.R., which it has been waging on a small scale since the memorable days of Lake Khassan, in August, 1938. During the three months June-July-August of this year alone, Japan lost 589 aeroplanes in that war, as against the 106 Soviet and Mongol planes brought down ; and suffered, at the end of August, a crushing and complete defeat, losing tens of thousands of killed and prisoners, with hundreds of guns and machine guns. But Japan could only afford such a "luxury" when it had the hope of co-operation with Hitler and support from Great Britain in an "Axis" war against the U.S.S.R. Directly that hope was shattered by the Soviet-German Pact

of Non-Aggression, Japanese imperialism—the imperialism of a still more rotten, corrupt and mediæval band of feudalists, merchant kings and sweaters than existed in Poland—was forced to give up the struggle, at all events for some time. The formal armistice it hastened to conclude with the U.S.S.R. is evidence. Japan will also, consequently, maintain its neutrality in the European war for as long as possible, until material interests dictate another course, and concentrate on its war in China. But the strain of that war, meeting with increasingly effective resistance from the Chinese people supported by the U.S.S.R., may yet drive its distracted rulers to new adventures. Such adventures may lead, not only to their authors breaking their own necks, but to their having their necks broken for them—a contingency which must be borne in mind.

One thing is certain—that the Chinese people will go on fighting with increasing strength, thanks to Soviet help and to the unifying national influence of the Chinese Communist Party. Whoever in China attempted to compromise that struggle by appeasing the aggressor, at the expense of the Chinese people, as was done in 1927, would find he had very different forces to reckon with.

If there was anything clear about the attitude of Turkey when the British Government approached her for an agreement regarding mutual assistance, it was that the Turkish Government trusted Mr. Chamberlain no further than it could see him. It had no intention of following the example of Colonel Beck by committing itself to a pact with Britain which, unaccompanied by an Anglo-Soviet pact, might easily become itself an anti-Soviet pact, leading to the most disastrous consequences for Turkey. Undoubtedly a contributory factor to this clarity and singleness of purpose in Turkey, by contrast with Poland, is that the Turkish national bourgeoisie has since the war carried very far that process of democratic reforms, based on an agrarian revolution, which was lacking in Poland. As a revolutionary country—revolutionary notwithstanding the fact that the Turkish national leader Kemal suppressed trade unions and jailed Communists—Turkey had known what it was to have the practical, material help of the U.S.S.R. in war and peace, and had no reason to fear it as did the ruling class of Pilsudski Poland. Therefore, while a general agreement about mutual assistance against a German attack in the Balkans exists between Britain and Turkey, the signature of a pact was not and could not be consummated until Turkey made sure that she could rely for immediate help on her mighty Soviet neighbour. Had the Anglo-Franco-Soviet pact come to fruition, that would have been guarantee enough. The failure of the negotiations and the fate of Poland have made the Turkish Government wary. No doubt the visit of the Turkish Foreign Minister to Moscow, which is beginning at the time of writing, will throw further light on the determination of the Turkish Government to see that its back door is securely bolted

before it ventures out at the front, even on the invitation of such a reliable ally as Mr. Chamberlain.

On the attitude of Turkey depend to a very considerable extent the decisions of the various Balkan States. But special reference has to be made to Rumania, anxious for Soviet protection in the Black Sea, yet conscious of the national oppression its ruling landlord class inflicts on the Bessarabians, kith and kin of the inhabitants of Soviet Moldavia across the River Dniester, and torn from them with Allied help during the Anglo-French invasion of Soviet Russia (just as western White Russia and western Ukraine were torn from Soviet Russia by Poland with Allied connivance in 1920). The Rumanian ruling class tried for years to play the Polish game of intrigue with Nazism against the U.S.S.R., but was finally brought up against the same contradiction as Poland—that created by the fact that Rumania is also a multi-national State, ruled without regard for the interests of the national minorities. The Red Army's advance into western Ukraine has thrown a sure barrier across the road of German invasion through Poland ; but there is till the possibility of attack through Hungary being encouraged by the spectacle of too ambiguous an attitude of the Rumanian ruling class towards its own democracy and towards the U.S.S.R. In that case, just as in the case of Poland, that ruling class would only have itself to thank if, the resulting disasters turned against itself, and not against the Soviet Union.

This, very roughly, is the complicated alignment of forces among the capitalist States of Europe and Asia, in which the Soviet Union has had to pursue its policy of preserving peace for its peoples under all circumstances, and of reinforcing international peace to the utmost of its ability, while being ready with crushing retorts to any armed attack. But there is one other factor which must be taken into account—the international Labour movement.

The outbreak of the European war has found the leaders of the Labour and Socialist International in the same condition of abject and humiliating bankruptcy, complete abnegation of socialist principles, utter servility to the capitalist class of their respective countries, as in 1914. No more disgusting spectacle revealed itself in August, 1914 than was presented in September, 1939, when the leader of the French Socialists, Blum, not only renounced any claim to criticise the Government of his capitalist masters, but hastened to turn, with jackal-like ferocity, upon the party representing the majority of the French working class—taking advantage of the fact that police repressions had robbed the Communists of their press, their freedom of meeting and even of their adequate parliamentary representation under war-time conditions. Equally, no more outrageous abandonment of all pretence to independence was seen among the so-called Socialist leaders in 1914 than the pitiable and revolting picture of Mr. Arthur Greenwood at House of Commons debates since the outbreak of war,

when his one concern was to out-do the Tories in the uncritical support of Mr. Chamberlain, and when both Liberals and Tories were able to make sharp criticism of government policy while the leader of the Labour Party only "ventured to make suggestions" and "threw out ideas." Naturally, it was not an accident that Messrs. Blum and Greenwood hastened to rush ahead even of capitalist politicians in denouncing the U.S.S.R., for daring not to comply with the plans that Messrs. Chamberlain and Daladier had laid for it. In all this, of course, Blum and Greenwood were not acting as individuals, or because of some individual failing, or even because they were "insincere"; a sincere lackey of the capitalists is no better than an insincere one, and in this case Messrs. Blum and Greenwood were speaking for an entire section of Labour officialdom.

Just as in 1914, the complete paralysis and self-effacement of the majority of the Labour leaders in Britain and France in 1939 were not the results of chance. They were preceded by five months of sitting on the fence while their Governments were playing the shameful comedy of the Moscow negotiations. Before that came the ambiguous attitude towards Czechoslovakia in the spring and summer of 1938, culminating in the *Daily Herald's* "God speed" to Chamberlain as he left for Munich, and in Blum's confession of "cowardice mingled with relief" at the results of that betrayal. Before that again came Blum's proposal, as Prime Minister of France, of "non-intervention" in Spain, and the British Labour Party's support of that policy during the first decisive twelve months of 1936 to 1937; with the refusal of both the British and French labour leaders to consider co-operation with the Communists for a campaign to end "non-intervention" and save the Spanish Republic, during the next eighteen months. Thus, the position to-day, when the British Labour Party and the French Socialist Party have been struck out, by the majority of their leaders, as an active force fighting for a working-class policy, is the result of a chain of events, for which those leaders bear the responsibility at every stage.

If there is a difference, and a big one, between the situation of the Labour movement to-day in both countries and that of 1914, it is not because of these leaders but in spite of them. It is because of the existence of the Communist International and of its affiliated parties in Britain and France, with their record of sharp, clear and consistent loyalty to and frankness with the working class on the issues of Spain, of Czechoslovakia, of relations with the U.S.S.R., of relations between their own Governments and the aggressor bloc. Thanks to this, a body of working class opinion exists in both countries, uniting a still wider body of progressive thought and activity, which knows the facts and is prepared to fight for the conclusions it draws from them, in a way that was impossible in 1914, or indeed for a couple of years after 1914. In this body of working class and progressive opinion, informed

and active thanks to the policy of the Communist Party—whether allowed to work legally or not—lies the surest guarantee that thousands of active members of the Labour Party and French Socialist Party, including local officials, trade unionists and M.P.s in their ranks, are already indignant, and will turn that indignation into action, before the spectacle of their leaders' collapse.

Meanwhile, the Soviet Union has had to take decisions of historic importance. The Soviet Union has always sought to be left in peace to build up Socialism—not because its leaders abandoned the cause of world revolution, as renegades and slanderers have said ever since 1918, but because they believe that revolution in other countries must be the work of the people of those countries, and because they believe they can make no greater contribution to the international Socialist cause than the building-up and successful defence of a classless Socialist society in a great State, covering one-sixth of the world. The Soviet Union, therefore, always sought peaceful co-existence with all capitalist States, irrespective of their form of government, whether fascist or bourgeois democratic, republican or monarchical, without attempting the illusory task of discriminating between them. But when threatened, directly or indirectly, it never was pacifist ; it always armed to the best of its ability itself, and it always sought to combine its forces with those of particular capitalist Powers, or groups of Powers, which temporarily, or for their own particular interests, were anxious to preserve international peace. The Soviet Union furthermore was always ready to make great sacrifices in defence or aid of the workers fighting capitalism in other countries, or of small countries which were the victims of aggression and fighting for their independence ; but it never made a principle of undertaking perpetual enmity to this or that imperialist Power, realising that this would make it a tool of rival imperialist Powers, which would be only too willing that the Soviet Union “ pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them,” in Stalin's telling phrase. And, as he said on another occasion, in 1934 : “ We never had any orientation towards Germany, nor have we any orientation towards Poland and France. Our orientation in the past, and our orientation at the present time, is towards the U.S.S.R., and the U.S.S.R. alone.” The Bolsheviks—Marxists and internationalists twenty years after the Revolution as they were twenty years before it—were always confident that, in pursuing such a policy throughout the years of Soviet power, they were serving at the same time the cause of the international working class.

This was why, having fought for collective security (through the League of Nations) and otherwise against the Fascist aggressors ever since 1934, when the deadly menace of Fascism to world peace first revealed itself, the U.S.S.R. proposed co-operation against the aggressor once again in March, 1939, after the German seizure of Czechoslovakia. It made plain at an early stage of the subsequent Moscow negotiations

what were the minimum terms on which, as a self-respecting and independent Power, it was prepared to co-operate with Britain and France. The British and French Governments, having exhausted every other means of dragging out the negotiations by conceding the Soviet minimum terms one step at a time—each step taking weeks of negotiation—were finally obliged to come out into the open at the military staff talks in August, and reveal by their flat rejection of the aid of the Red Army for Poland (under deadly menace from a crushingly superior German army and air force all round its borders) that they had had no serious intention of accepting Soviet aid at all. Yet, under pressure from certain sections of public opinion, they had allowed the negotiations to drag on, and had allowed Hitler to move from commitment to commitment, being encouraged by the spectacle of such delay. What was the explanation?

Obviously that, if they possibly could, they wished to avoid fighting for Poland once again, as they had avoided fighting for Czechoslovakia, in the hope that this new act of appeasement would once again prove their goodwill to Hitler, and induce him to attack the U.S.S.R.—to whom, with no pact, they had no obligations. Failing this, and if Poland were attacked, they were banking on the idea that “the U.S.S.R. will be in it anyway,” on the theory that the U.S.S.R. is afraid to have a common border with Hitler, and on its presumed unwillingness to appear as “standing aside from the victim of an aggressor” in the eyes of the western peoples, even though it had no assurance of support from the British and French Governments. Failing that again, they were obviously calculating that, even if Poland were overwhelmed in the first onslaught as it must be, the superior material resources of Britain and France, with the U.S.A. in the rear, would be sufficient to carry them to victory in a prolonged war; and that Hitler would reckon with this when, having overrun Poland, his troops arrived, flushed with victory, at the Soviet border. He would know, in that case, that, should he decide to turn on the U.S.S.R., he would have no more hearty applause or appreciative audience than the British and French Governments, untrammelled by any obligations to the U.S.S.R. other than those of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which they had successfully destroyed in their strangling of Republican Spain (the Franco-Soviet pact was also subject to the Covenant).

The U.S.S.R. would have committed suicide and played false to international Socialism, had it fallen into any of these traps. Seeing that the British and French Governments were not prepared to guarantee international peace, and with it peace for the Soviet Union, by publicly and irrevocably combining their forces with those of the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Government necessarily had to find other means of preserving peace and security for its peoples. It had the means ready to hand. All through the negotiations in Moscow it had been perfectly clear that the cardinal importance for international peace of

an Anglo-French combination with the U.S.S.R. was precisely that Hitler knew that in the U.S.S.R. he would find more than his match. War between Germany and the U.S.S.R. was the last thing the Nazi Government wanted. When the Soviet Government, therefore, on the breakdown of the staff talks, signified to the German Government its willingness to sign a pact of non-aggression, Ribbentrop was sent post-haste to Moscow. This was not "making a war certain," as liars and shallow thinkers have tried to persuade the public ever since. War had been made certain by the steady accumulation of war-like preparations by Hitler during the preceding months, encouraged by Anglo-French ambiguity as we have seen : and by the determination of the Polish people to resist, believing in good faith that their rulers were arranging for effective help, whether from the U.S.S.R. or from Britain and France. What the pact did was to ensure that the U.S.S.R. was not dragged against its will into a war not of its provoking, and brought about by a flagrant disregard of its advice and proffered help.

Some there are, even of good faith, who have the assurance to suggest that the U.S.S.R. ought nevertheless to have threatened Hitler with war, and even maybe gone into war on behalf of Poland, knowing thereby that it was fulfilling the dearest wish of Messrs. Chamberlain and Daladier, and that they might thereupon leave it in the lurch. These people suggest that, in taking this awful risk, the Soviet Union should have relied upon the Labour movements in Britain and France to come to its aid, by exercising pressure on their respective Governments, or even maybe by overthrowing them. People who advocate such a view can have no understanding of the policy of adventure which they are thereby pressing irresponsibly upon a Socialist State. They are repeating the very criminal lunacy which the so-called "Left Communists" led by Bukharin (in reality, as proved later, sham "Left" traitors) were urging on Lenin and the Soviet Government in 1918. And it is just at this point that the analysis we have made of the state of the Labour movement in Britain and France is of tremendous importance. What justification is there for the belief, what guarantee can these irresponsible "advisers" give, that the Labour bureaucracy in Britain and France would not have sabotaged and crushed the initiative of their own members—yes, even though millions of them were burning with a sense of international solidarity—and aided thereby their imperialist rulers, just as they did in the case of Spain and in the case of Czechoslovakia? Moreover, it would have been too late for the Soviet Government to retrace its steps once the fatal decision had been taken, or to ask for a reckoning from its misguided or criminal "advisers" in western countries. Oh, yes, they would have been only too ready to open a relief fund, to pass resolutions of sympathy and condolence, to receive a few refugees. But these things would be poor consolation. The Bolsheviks fought Tsarism for twenty years, the workers and peasants of the U.S.S.R. under their leadership have

for twenty-two years gone through immense privations, trials and difficulties, not in order to be consoled at the end of it with relief funds and resolutions, but to build the first Socialist State on earth, a country of labour in dignity, equality, knowledge and happiness, a model for the other working people of the world. They are determined to preserve the U.S.S.R., not to risk it by mad adventures for illusory advantages.

Instead of throwing all their influence into a revolutionary struggle to clear the poison of opportunism and class collaboration—a la Greenwood and Blum—from the ranks of the Labour movement, these short-sighted “advisers” have been trying to get the U.S.S.R. to make up for their own defection. That is not Socialism, or internationalism, or even plain commonsense ; it is simply a cowardly refusal to face facts. The Bolsheviks, at any rate, have always been noted for their readiness to face even the most unpleasant facts.

And this quality stood them in good stead within a fortnight of war being declared, when the resistance of the Polish army had in the main theatres been decisively broken, when all effective authority of the Polish State had disappeared, and when there was no real barrier, despite a few islands of heroic resistance, to a German advance right up to the Soviet frontier. There can be no disputing the facts ; they were told by correspondents of the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph and Morning Post*, in Poland and on its borders. The unpleasant problem before the Bolsheviks was whether they would allow the Germans to go on up to the Soviet border—thereby creating the conditions for the third alternative envisaged by Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier—or whether they would give Hitler a blunt reminder of their power, and at the same time release from the terrors of war those populations whom the Polish State had torn from Soviet White Russia and Soviet Ukraine, by wanton aggression, in 1920, and whom it was now totally unable to defend. The Soviet Government naturally chose the second alternative ; and the howl of rage which went up from the capitalist Press, at this decision, was just as revealing of the hidden intentions and desires of the British and French capitalists as the similar howl of protest that went up when Hitler signed the non-aggression pact with the U.S.S.R. in August—first and foremost against Hitler, for betraying the trust that had been put in him one day to attack the U.S.S.R. !

It is characteristic and significant that the capitalist politicians and newspapers, after the first howl of fury, relapsed into a sulky silence to count the real injuries they had suffered, and to see whether they could not turn the Soviet action to some profit—by underlining the barrier thrown up to German penetration of Rumania, by speculating on the revolutionary effect of Soviet proximity on the peoples of Germany and of the countries she dominates, and even by new hopes of a Soviet-German quarrel. It is equally characteristic and significant

that the capitalists' obedient and thick-witted lackeys, like the *Daily Herald*, should have continued their roar of fury against the U.S.S.R., even after the rest of the choir had stopped. It is characteristic, because they reveal how little they are conscious of their rôle of lackeys. It is significant, because irrespective of whether they are conscious of it or not, they are thereby playing the rôle appointed for them by the capitalists—of poisoning the minds of the workers of Great Britain against the U.S.S.R., as a preparation for turning the war against Germany, should the occasion arise, into a war against the land of Socialism.

It would be idle to predict the course of a war like the present ; it would be equally idle to deny that the idea of such an outcome is present in some minds among British reactionaries of considerable influence. However it came—whether by a direct patching up of the quarrel with Germany, on the basis of a free hand for Hitler and for a reconstituted Poland against the U.S.S.R. (as Hitler himself offered only a few months ago) ; or whether by provoking a quarrel between the U.S.S.R. and one of its neighbours, in East or West, in order to create a situation which would attract Hitler or whether in order to prevent Soviet assistance later on to a victorious German revolution, as the Allies did in 1919—whether it came by these or other channels, the transformation of war against Hitler into war against the U.S.S.R. would indeed be a grateful and comforting solution to British and French reactionaries. It is the despicable rôle of the Greenwoods, the Blums, the pundits of the *Daily Herald* (not to mention the Trotskyist and other lesser rabble) to do what they can for such a noble cause.

It is particularly important, at this first stage of the war, and when there is loose talk about war aims among those who want to avoid the unpleasant problems of fighting against betrayal of the Labour movement, to draw attention to the problem of a democratic outcome of the war in Germany. If there is a perennial problem of German imperialist expansion and aggression in Europe—and with it a problem of what is popularly known as “ Prussianism ” or the “ Junker mind ” in Germany itself—it is because these problems are insoluble within the framework of the capitalist system. The failure of the German bourgeoisie for various historical reasons to seize the fullness of power in the nineteenth century, and to wipe out the power of the great landowners, still living in conditions and soaked with traditions of the Middle-Ages, meant that Germany became a great imperialist Power in the twentieth century under the rule of a Junker-bourgeois alliance, with the Junkers predominant and stamping their impression upon the whole country. Their defeat in the war of 1914-1918—their first bid for world dominion—bankrupted them ; but we have seen earlier how they were saved, their cadres kept in being, and their German people crushed back by the effective intervention of the Allies. This prevented the masses of the German people from moving

leftward towards the Spartacists as the Russian people had moved towards the Bolsheviks. But the price was a restoration of Junker-bourgeois rule in infinitely more critical conditions, and the creation of Nazism as a means of continuing that rule, when revolution threatened and social-democratic disruption permitted. Should the outcome of this war result in a mere palace revolution in Germany—Goering or the generals replacing Hitler—or in a new Weimar Republic, cloaking the savage repression of the revolutionary movement, or in a solution such as that favoured by Marshal Foch at the end of the last war, and already favoured by some irresponsible writers to-day : the break-up of Germany into a kind of Balkanised mass of petty States—this would spell a new nationalist revival and a new war even sooner than the last. There is only one way to solve the problem of “Prussianism”—that is to give the German people full freedom to carry out their own ruthless, drastic and Jacobin “clean-up” of the country, involving not merely a consistently democratic change but a Socialist revolution. No doubt, that was the very reason why Mr. Chamberlain and M. Daladier did not want at any price to see Hitler defeated by the Red Army : sooner the perpetual recurrence of war in Europe than a Socialist Republic in Germany, with the certainty of similar Socialist States elsewhere ! It is not too early even now to begin the struggle to ensure that, in spite of Messrs. Chamberlain and Daladier, that will be the outcome of the war so far as Germany is concerned.

The Soviet Union may be trusted to do its duty by the international working class, in this respect as in all others, by every means open to it. It is upon the Socialists and Communists of Britain and France that devolves the obligation of making those means as numerous and effective as possible, by fighting against the betrayal of the Labour movement and for real People’s Governments in Britain and France.

The Labour Movement and the War

BY J. R. CAMPBELL
AND FINLAY HART

BRITAIN IS AT war with German Fascism. Its war Government is under the control of the men who were dominant in the National Government of recent years. The Labour movement has in the past painted a fairly clear and damning picture of these men and the foreign policy they were pursuing.

The Blackpool Trades Union Congress of 1938 placed it on record that :

In our view, the policy of the National Government has contributed to bolstering up the Fascist Governments of Italy, Germany and Japan, which Governments are totally opposed to free Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies and other working-class organisations, and have either destroyed or suppressed the liberty of their peoples. This Congress declares its emphatic opposition to such a Tory policy, which is not only lowering to the prestige of the British nation, but, owing to its vacillating character, is actually provocative of war.

The Southport Conference of the Labour Party held in May-June, 1939, was equally condemnatory.

"This Conference," said the resolution on the international situation "sternly condemns the shameful record of the so-called National Government which during the past seven and a half years has repeatedly condoned aggression, betrayed Democracy in Spain, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere, sapped the foundations of the League of Nations and gravely imperilled the security of our own country."

Such was the Labour movement's characterisation of the National Government, i.e., the Government which with one or two new faces is ruling us to-day.

It is worthwhile, therefore, to ask ourselves what was the attitude of the Labour movement towards the Government both in the period before and the period immediately after the declaration of war.

One of the principal questions of the immediate pre-war period was the struggle of the democratic forces of this country to force the Government to conclude an immediate pact of mutual assistance with the Soviet Union. The resolution on the international situation at the Southport Conference expressed :

Its deep concern at the prolonged delay in concluding a definite and unequivocal pact with France and the Soviet Union for mutual defence.

This resolution was passed on Tuesday, May 30. From that moment until the middle of August, when the Anglo-Soviet negotiations broke down, the Labour movement conducted no real campaign for the signing of the Anglo-Soviet Pact. Yet when the negotiations break down, the same Labour movement proceeds in advance of any information to condemn the Soviet Union.

When the Soviet-German Pact was signed the *Daily Herald* excelled all other papers in vituperation. "If there is a war of aggression against Poland," said Mr. Francis Williams, "heavy indeed will be the burden of Soviet guilt." This type of argument overlooks the fact that throughout the Anglo-Soviet negotiations the Soviet Union offered to guarantee both the Baltic States and Poland against aggression from without and within. The precious weeks went past and the British Government was unable to find a formula that would cover indirect aggression in the Baltic States. The British complaint was not that the Soviet Union was offering to do too little but on the contrary was offering to do too much.

The attitude of Poland—or rather should we say Polish Fascism—was even more remarkable. It was that the Soviet Union could supply Poland with munitions or with aeroplanes, but that as far as the defence of Poland was concerned Soviet troops were not needed. This attitude was supported by the British Government.

We do not believe that British or French generals could endorse such fantastic strategy. It was political considerations which determined this line. Is it any wonder that the Soviet Union felt that what it was being invited to do was (1) to embroil itself in a war with Nazi Germany; (2) to refrain from such military action as would enable it to speedily win the war; and (3) to have to bear the full weight of war with Nazi Germany after the latter had been allowed to smash through Poland without effective resistance?

Is it any wonder that to the Soviet Union this looked more like a plan for diverting German aggression eastwards against the Soviet Union than for winning a decisive victory over Fascism? How in the light of the defeats sustained by Poland in the first days of the war can this attitude of the British, French and Polish governments during the negotiations with the Soviet Union be justified?

Yet the official Labour movement sweepingly condemned the Soviet Union at the very moment when other critics of the National Government were putting the responsibility where it belonged. Writing of the failure to conclude a pact with the Soviet Union, Mr. Lloyd George said:

We must not conceal from ourselves the enormous difference it would have made to our chances in this hour . . . if two powerful Russian armies were advancing . . .

That was the plan placed before our military mission by Voroshilov, the Soviet War Minister. The tragic story of the rejection of this plan has yet to be told and the responsibility for the stupidities that lost

us Russia's powerful support justly affixed and sternly dealt with. (*Sunday Express*, September 10, 1939.)

Another curious argument of the Labour Party was to the effect that even if the Soviet Union had been denied the possibility of concluding a pact of mutual assistance with France and Britain it need not have concluded a pact of non-aggression with Nazi Germany. This is to ask the Soviet Union to put itself in a position where it could be made the victim of an appeasement agreement between Britain and Germany which would have led to Germany attacking the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union had its own good reasons for believing that this was the aim of the famous Munich agreement of September, 1938. If it could not get the full protection of a water-tight pact of mutual assistance it was at least entitled to conclude a pact of non-aggression based on its own military strength.

The result of that pact is known to all. In the very same article we have just quoted Mr. Francis Williams says :

But for Russia's neutrality Germany has had to pay a heavy price and the full bill has not yet been presented.

She has certainly lost as potential allies in war Japan and Spain. She has staggered her associates in Italy.

And in the alignment of forces and particularly in the employment of our already overwhelming naval forces, these facts will count heavily in favour of France and ourselves.

The similar estimation of the results of the German-Soviet Pact was up till and beyond the outbreak of war expressed almost nightly in the B.B.C. broadcasts to Germany. Like the Government, therefore, the official Labour movement ran two contradictory lines of propaganda: (1) that the German-Soviet Pact encouraged Hitler aggression, and (2) that it had deprived Hitler of allies.

The latter is more in accordance with the truth. Hitler has started the war without the aid of those allies whom everyone expected to stand by his side.

A Labour movement that based itself upon an analysis of the past policy of the National Government would not have credulously accepted the British Foreign Office's version of the Soviet-German pact. It would have remembered the long-drawn out hatred of British Toryism for the Soviet Union, the thinly concealed hostility of members of the Government to the whole idea of the Anglo-Soviet pact and it would have concentrated its attack on the National Government, whose whole attitude led to the breakdown of negotiations. Instead of telling the British people that it was their own government which bore the major responsibility for the breakdown of negotiations, the official Labour movement regard the Munich politicians whom its own resolutions had condemned for "repeatedly condoning aggression," as if they were a lot of deeply injured innocents. Instead of telling the British people that their defence required an entirely new Government which could enlist the co-operation of the Soviet Union

and the U.S.A., all the venom of the Labour leadership was concentrated on the Soviet Union.

Unless the whole of the past analysis of the National Government by both Labour Party and Trade Union Congress was at fault, the first question that should have been posed was: "Is a government composed of men with such a record capable of defending the interests of the working class or representing the interests of the British people?" These questions were never put. Criticism of the Soviet Government was a smoke screen behind which the Labour Party marched to co-operation with the National Government.

It is true that the Labour Party refused an offer of seats for two of its members in the new War Government. It is true that in a circular to local Labour Parties it stressed the need for maintaining its independence. But the independence of the Labour Movement is no empty formality. Independence means pursuing a different policy from that pursued by the government and struggling for a change of government in order that the policy shall be carried out. Independence does not mean the refusal to enter a given government; it means an active struggle for a new government. Without such a struggle independence can have no real meaning.

It is from this standpoint that we must judge the 71st Trade Union Congress which met at Bridlington the day after the declaration of war.

This Congress had two tasks to accomplish. It had to give a clear analysis of why the war had come and what the attitude of the Labour movement was to the prosecution of the war, and it had to outline a policy with regard to the protection of the economic and social interests of the working class in war-time. It attempted neither.

Delegates failed to get Congress to instruct the General Council and the General Purposes Committee to bring forward recommendations stating clearly the independent attitude of the whole movement in war time and demanding legislation that would protect the interests of the workers and the people at the same time as it helped to successfully prosecute the war to liberate all peoples from the yoke of Nazi aggression.

At the outset of the Congress it was explained that the General Purposes Committee could not bring forward such a programme as consideration would have to be given to it which was impossible in the time before Congress. It was obviously overlooked that during the whole of the past year the General Council has been in consultation with the Government in preparation for such emergencies as now confronted them.

This failure to bring forward proposals as to the specific way the Trade Union movement should maintain its freedom of action to secure the well-being of its members, prevent abuses and profiteering, can only be interpreted as complete abdication before the Government.

The discussion on the international situation revealed the complete

failure of the Congress to face up to the problems created by the war.

Mr. Hallsworth, in his Presidential speech did say, however :

Wiser, firmer and more far-sighted statesmanship on the part of our Government could have averted many, if not most, of the dangers that now threaten the world's peace.

This is then discounted in the emergency resolution on the war that was presented in the form of a Declaration to the German people, which said it was the German Government :

and their Government alone, that has struck at the foundations upon which the free nations sought to build a new international order to preserved freedom and safeguard peace.

A number of the delegates sought to have the full responsibilities for the present situation placed on the shoulders of all who were responsible. As stated very clearly by W. Zak, of the Furnishing Trades :

I cannot agree, as is stated in the proposed Declaration that Hitler alone is responsible. In view of all the past decisions of Congress, in view of the fact that it has repeatedly condemned Chamberlain, I feel that Congress cannot say it has confidence in Chamberlain. Disarmed Germany could not in the six years since Hitler took power in 1933 have re-armed to the point to which it has at the present time, when it has involved us in a war, had it not been for the assistance which has been given to Nazi capitalism by British Toryism and the Chamberlain Government.

The real line of the right-wing leadership came out in the statement of the General Secretary, Sir Walter Citrine, particularly in his reply to the discussion. His concern was to indict the Soviet Union and defend the policy of Chamberlain. The *Daily Herald* of September 5, quotes him as saying :

Russia was going to supply Germany with oil and other commodities essential for the prosecution of the war. That was a consequence of the trading agreement. . . . They could not get behind the fact that Russia, with whom they were negotiating, made a pact with the enemy. It was unquestionable that Russia had precipitated the war.

I would like to know what the secret clauses of the Agreement were. It did not require Ribbentrop and 32 others to negotiate a six-point Pact.

It is quite obvious that Sir Walter Citrine's well-known abhorrence of the Soviet Union has blinded him to what everyone else who cares to examine the position can plainly see.

What justification has he for saying that "Russia was going to supply Germany with oil and other commodities essential for the prosecution of the war," and thereby imply that it is on the side of the Nazis against Britain ?

Sir Walter based his argument on the Soviet-German Trade Agreement. Under the terms of this agreement Germany was to furnish the Soviet Union with credits in the form of machine tools, etc., and the Soviet Union would supply Germany with a certain amount of wheat and oil. It never struck Sir Walter to enquire whether this agreement was one which was meant for peace time or war time. A few days later, when the Soviet partial mobilisation took place,

there was immediate rationing of petrol in the Soviet Union—the fact being that given its own needs and the increased needs of its army in a state of partial mobilisation there is no surplus of oil in the Soviet Union on which Nazi Germany or anyone else will draw. A few days later the Soviet Union declared that it would supply goods to no country that was not able to pay cash down—a thing that Nazi Germany is manifestly unable to do. Sir Walter Citrine's myth of a vast supply of Soviet goods being placed at the disposal of the Nazi aggressors is a product of his unbridled hatred of the Soviet Union.

According to Citrine, the Russians, behind the backs of the people with whom they were negotiating, made a pact with the enemy. Let us look a little closer to the facts.

If Sir Walter would think a little less hastily and not permit his hatred to run away with his head, he would have amended his statement—"The action of Russia in concluding this pact has precipitated this war"—to read—the action of Britain in failing to conclude a Pact of Mutual Assistance with Russia has precipitated this war.

Let us put the responsibility where it belongs. All of us have now to face up to our responsibilities for permitting the Government of this country since 1931 to aid and abet aggression. A great deal of this responsibility rests upon the British Trade Union and Labour movement. For never yet have we challenged in any effective way the policy of Chamberlain and Co.

Another argument which Citrine used was as follows. "Suppose a trade union is negotiating with another union with regard to common action against an employer. What would you think of one of the unions which went behind the back of the other and signed an agreement with the employer?"

An analogy should fit the facts. There were two employing class states (Britain and Germany) and one workers' state (the Soviet Union)—or in terms of Sir Walter's analogy two employers and one trade union. Both employers (Germany and Britain) had co-operated against the Soviet Union at Munich last year, for everyone now realises that the real meaning of the Munich agreement was to divert German expansion against the Soviet Union. Now one of the employers (Great Britain), fearing an attack from the other (Germany) was anxious to get the aid of the trade union (Soviet Russia) but was not anxious to fully guarantee the trade union against an attack from the other employer (Germany) because it (Britain) still hoped to get the other employer to attack the trade union. When the trade union realised that it could not get a firm agreement with the first employer (Great Britain) to stand against the second (Germany), when it saw that the first employer was still hopeful of inducing the second to attack it, it had to safeguard itself. This it did by signing a non-aggression pact with the second employer.

That is the analogy which Sir Walter might have used if he had

not characteristically forgotten the class character of the states in question.

We could quote indefinitely to show the age-long hostility of the dominant leadership of the British trade unions to anything connected with the Soviet Union and their complete failure to understand the working-class character of the Soviet Government or its policy. Side by side with this we can place the record of the T.U.C. in relation to the Tory Governments and more particularly in its relations with the National Government.

A change is taking place, however, which will be strengthened with the growth of trade unionism in this country. This change is becoming more evident among the workers in the factories and among the class-conscious elements inside the trade union movement. The attitude of such unions as the Engineers, Miners, Distributive Workers, Building and others at their 1939 Annual Conferences is just one of the indications of this change. In conditions of war, when the workers will undoubtedly express their anti-fascist feelings and determinedly struggle to remove Fascism for ever, there must simultaneously take place a change in the attitude of the trade union movement as a whole.

India and the War

The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress has adopted on September 14 a statement with regard to the war, of which the following summary has been cabled by the General Secretary :

THE CONGRESS WORKING Committee issued a statement of over two thousand words last night (14/9/39) on the attitude of Congress to the War situation. It recalls the previous resolutions of the Congress on the same subject, especially the one passed last month wherein the Congress expressed its displeasure at the flouting of Indian opinion by the British Government and asked the Congress members of the Central Legislative Assembly to refrain from attendance of the present session.

Since then, the British Government has deliberately ignored Indian opinion and without its consent declared India a Belligerent Country, promulgated Emergency Ordinances, passed the India Act Amending Bill and other vital measures circumscribing and limiting the powers and activities of Provincial Governments.

The Working Committee takes the gravest view of these developments.

The Congress has repeatedly condemned Fascism, Nazism and aggression, which it considers as the intensification of the Imperialism against which the Indian people have always struggled. The Working Committee condemns the latest Nazi aggression against Poland and expresses its sympathies with the resistance to that aggression.

The Congress has laid down that the issue involving India in war must be decided by Indian people only and they cannot permit their resources to be exploited for the purposes of Imperialism. Any such attempts will necessarily be opposed by the Indian people.

Indian sympathy is entirely on the side of democracy and freedom, but she is not able to associate herself with the present war when freedom is denied to her and even the presented limited freedom is taken away. The Governments of Britain and France declare that they are fighting for democracy and freedom against aggression, but their past history is full of betrayals of proclaimed ideals. The last war meant secret treaties, Versailles and enlargements of Empires. In Manchuria, Abyssinia, Czechoslovakia and Spain aggression was encouraged, democracy betrayed and collective security sabotaged. The League of Nations has been killed.

The Working Committee believes that the people of the Western World are genuinely moved by the ideals of saving democracy and freedom and the Congress is in full agreement with them. But, their governments have repeatedly failed to keep faith with their peoples.

If the present war is for defending the *status quo*, Imperialist

possessions, colonies and vested interests, then India can have nothing to do with it. If the issue, however, is democracy and a new world order, then India is intensely interested. There is no conflict between Indian democracy and British or world democracy, but there is an inherent conflict between Democracy and Imperialism and Fascism. If Britain fights for democracy, then she must necessarily end imperialism and establish full democracy in India. Self-determination, a Constituent Assembly and the guidance of the future policy by the people of India must be accepted.

A free India will gladly join other free nations for mutual defence, economic co-operation and a new world order based on freedom. The present crisis affects the future of humanity. The inevitable consequences of social and political conflicts can finally be resolved only by the removal of their causes, the establishment of a new equilibrium based on the ending of domination and exploitation of one country by another and the reorganisation of economic relations on a more just basis. India is the crux of the problem, as she is the outstanding example of modern imperialism. No refashioning of the world can succeed without the solution of the Indian problem. As a free country and with her energies released India must play her part in world reorganisation. Freedom is indivisible to-day. Every attempt to retain Imperialism will lead to fresh disasters.

The rulers of the Indian States advocate the cause of democracy in Europe but retain undiluted autocracy in their States. The British Government is responsible for this autocracy even more than the rulers themselves—so recent events painfully demonstrate. This is a negation of the democracy and the new world order for which Britain claims to fight.

Viewing past events, the Working Committee fails to find any attempt to advance democracy on the part of Britain. The true measure of democracy is the attempt to end Imperialism and Fascism alike. For this the Committee is eager to help but it cannot co-operate in a war conducted on Imperialist lines for the consolidation of Imperialism.

In view of the gravity of the occasion the Working Committee defers its final decision to allow full elucidation of the issues on the present and future position of India. But the decision cannot long be delayed as India is being daily committed to a policy of which she disapproves. The Working Committee invites the British Government to declare unequivocally their war aims regarding democracy and imperialism and the establishment of a new world order and how those aims will be applied to India now, and whether they include the elimination of Imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy is guided by her own people. The real test of their declaration is its application to India at present.

During past years wars in Abyssinia, Spain and China have resulted in massacres, bombings, tortures and humiliations, and the horrors

grow. They must be checked in Europe and China. But they will not end till the root causes of Fascism and Imperialism are removed. To this end the Working Committee is prepared to give co-operation. It would, however, be an infinite tragedy if even this war is carried on in the spirit of Imperialism for the purpose of retaining the very structure which causes war.

The Indian people have no quarrel with German, Japanese or other peoples, but have deep-rooted quarrels with systems that deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression.

India does not desire a dictated peace or the victory of one people over another, but a real democracy for all peoples and a world freed from violence and imperialist oppression.

The Working Committee appeals to all Indian people to unite and to end all internal conflicts and controversies, and to keep in readiness and hold together as a united nation determined to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world.

The New Situation in China

3 The Role of the Communist Party

BY MAO TSE-TUNG

[The following article is the third and concluding part of the abridged report to the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the Communist Party of China, held on October 12, 1938. The two previous parts appeared in the July and September numbers of the LABOUR MONTHLY].

WHAT IS THE position of the Communist Party in the war? In what way should the Communists exert their best efforts? We have summarised our experiences up to now, estimated the present situation, enumerated the important tasks facing the nation, explained the theory and practice of the maintenance of the protracted war by a long-term United Front, and analysed the international situation. What else?

Comrades! There is one other point, namely, the question of the rôle of the Communist Party in this war. This is a question of realising our task and its fulfilment by a stronger and more firmly united party.

Patriotism and Internationalism

The Communists are internationalists. Can they be at the same time patriotic nationalists? They can and should be according to historical conditions. There is the nationalism of the Japanese aggressors and that of Adolf Hitler. There is also our nationalism. The Communists are strictly opposed to the nationalism of the Japanese aggressors and Adolf Hitler. The members of the Japanese and German Communist Parties have taken the stand of defeat for the aggressors, and they are working in every possible way to help defeat the Japanese imperialists and Adolf Hitler. This is their correct line and they are adhering to it. The reason for this is that the Japanese and German aggressive wars bring disaster not only to their victims and the world at large, but also to the Japanese and German peoples themselves. For us nationalism is the complement of internationalism. We fight under the slogan: defend our fatherland against the aggressors. For us defeatism is a crime and the defence of our fatherland is the only way to avert national disaster. The entire nation must be free before we can speak of the emancipation of the proletariat and the toiling masses. Our nationalism is actually a manifestation of internationalism in time of national revolutionary war. For this reason, every Communist should resolutely

march forward on the field of battle to fight in this, our national revolutionary war. Every rifle should be aimed at the enemy without a single thought other than victory. Every Communist should do everything to help the other friendly parties and anti-Japanese armies. There must not be any psychology of watching from the side lines to see other groups go down in defeat. This is why our party as early as 1931 came out with the slogan of fighting a war of self-defence against the Japanese aggressors. This was followed by our proposal of and work towards a National Anti-Japanese United Front. The membership of our party formed the vanguard to go to the front against the Japanese aggressors. They are defending our fatherland to the last drop of their blood. All these tasks, and this nationalism, are correct and they are our duties. They are not in any way contrary to internationalism, but are a concrete manifestation of internationalism in China. Only those lacking political understanding or those with ulterior motives say that we are wrong or that we have discarded our internationalism.

The model work of the Communists in this national war

For the reasons listed above, the Communists in this national war should show the highest resoluteness in all phases of their work and be the vanguards and models in everything. The war is proceeding under difficult conditions. Our difficulties are characterised by the fact that the inherent power of the nation is just beginning to develop. The masses of the people are not yet sufficiently awakened. There is not enough self-respect and self-confidence. The greater part of the broad masses are not yet organised. Our military power is not yet sufficiently strong and our economy is backward. Political democracy is not developed to the desired degree. There is still a good deal of corruption and pessimism. The United Front has not yet attained the required strength and unity. In all these difficulties the most important task for the Communists is the responsibility of uniting the nation to liquidate all the backward features that are hampering our way to victory. Here the Communists in the vanguards must realise the importance of setting examples in their work. In the Eighth Route Army they must be models of heroic fighters and political workers, of carrying out orders, of discipline, and inner unity. In dealing with the other friendly parties and armies the Communists should stand upon unity and adhere to the programme of the United Front, thereby setting an example in carrying out all the tasks of the war. They must be careful in their daily behaviour, not to show the least amount of arrogance. When occasion arises the Communists must honestly consult the friendly parties and armies in order to arrive at a decision so that all may work together. This is the way to be models of good work in the United Front. The Communists who have positions in the Central Government should work with fairness, and not show any favouritism. They must do much work for little reward. Working among the masses in various anti-

Japanese movements, the Communists should be the friends of the people and not feel in any way above them. They must teach the backward, tirelessly carry on propaganda for the United Front, and never become political bureaucrats. In no place and at no time must the Communists place their self-interest above that of others—their self-interest is the interest of the people. Self-interest, laziness, corruption and self-glorification are to be despised. Public spirit, resoluteness, self-sacrifice and hard work are the necessary qualities of a model worker in every phase of the war. The Communists must join hands with all the progressive elements outside our Party to work for progress and advancement. They must understand that they are only a small part of the nation and that there are many progressive elements with whom they must work together. The idea that we are right and all the others are wrong is entirely incorrect. The attitude of a Communist toward the backward elements must be one not of disdain, but of respect so that he may come near them and encourage them toward progress. The attitude of a Communist toward those who have made mistakes in their work, except for hopeless elements, should be advisory instead of censorial, so that they will correct their errors. The Communists must at all times try to do the correct thing, their Marxist farsightedness should never be allowed to blur so that they are always oriented to the right direction. They must be model students and learn from the masses while teaching them. They must learn from the masses, from their environment and from other friendly parties and armies so as to understand them. In this way they will be able to do their work correctly and not lose sight of the final objective. Under the gruelling conditions of the protracted war, the Communists, members of the other parties, soldiers of the other armies, and all the progressive elements of the people must work together and set examples for the entire nation as vanguards in the task of mobilising the entire nation for progress, victory and national reconstruction.

Rally the Entire Nation and Fight against the Spies and Traitors within the National United Front

The central task in surmounting all the obstacles and in attaining ultimate victory lies in the rallying together of the entire nation to develop and strengthen the United Front so that the inherent energy of all the classes of the nation can be mobilised. This is the main direction of our work. But at the same time there are some traitors and spies within the National United Front and still more trying to get inside. All of them carry on destructive work. Having adopted an anti-Japanese face, these traitors, Trotskyites and Japanophiles carry on their real activities under cover. The Communists must always be on the alert in exposing these elements by the use of actual evidence and call upon the other parties, armies and the masses to be vigilant so as not to be cheated by these spies. The Communists

have an important responsibility in raising the level of political alertness of the masses. Exposure of traitors cannot be separated from the development and strengthening of the National United Front.

But we cannot shut the doors of our Party through fear of these traitorous elements. Boldly open our doors for the growth of the Party.

The United Front and the Independence of Our Party

Victory necessitates a long-continued and firm National Anti-Japanese United Front. This is the main direction. But at the same time it is necessary for each party within the United Front to keep its own ideological, political and organisational independence. This applies to the Kuomintang, the Communist Party or any other party. Democracy, one of the Three People's Principles, permits the simultaneous existence of the United Front and the independence of all parties. Not only the Communist Party but any other party will agree that a United Front without party independence does not conform with the democratic principle. Unquestionably party independence cannot be held above the United Front and the former must be subordinated to the latter. Each is the correlative of the other. If this were not the case, we would not be able to maintain the United Front and we would be turning against our fundamental policy of unity for resistance. Compulsory or voluntary destruction of ideological, political and organisational liberty and independence cannot be carried through without at the same time destroying our United Front, that is, our policy of unity against the enemy. Members of the Communist Party and the other parties must understand this.

The relationship between the class struggle and the national struggle is the same as that between party independence and the United Front. Our basic principle is the subordination of everything to the interest of our anti-Japanese war. The class struggle must be adjusted to the demands of the national struggle. There should not be any contradiction between these two phases. Under the conditions of class society, however, it is impossible to abolish the class struggle, because there is no way to do it. The denial of the existence of the class struggle is an unnatural theory. We do not deny the existence of the class struggle but we can adjust the struggle itself. We are the advocates of mutual assistance and mutual concession. This policy is not only applicable to the inter-party relationship but also to the inter-class relationship. For the sake of unity against the enemy a proper policy of adjusting the relations between classes can be formulated so that it is acceptable to all the classes. We cannot let the toiling masses go on without political and economic guarantees, nor yet can we neglect to respect the interests of the propertied classes. This is the way to answer the demand of unity against the enemy.

The Policy of Developing Cadres

The Communist Party of China is the leading revolutionary party of a nation of 450,000,000 people. It cannot fulfil its historic mission without a great many able and disciplined cadres of leaders. During the past seventeen years our party has trained a large number of leading Party workers. It is to the everlasting glory of the nation and of the Party that we have formed steel cores of our cadres in the army, in the political and cultural fields and in various people's movements. But at the same time the existing cores are not enough to form the required supporting pillars of the huge structure represented by our present struggle. We need to train more cadres. The great national revolutionary struggle has already brought to the surface and will continue to bring up numerous leaders from the ranks. Our duty is to organise them, cultivate and protect them and make good use of them. "After the political policy has been decided upon, cadres constitute the determining factor." We must not forget this truism. We are using the forces we have as the foundation but we are not yet satisfied with the foundation. It is, therefore, our duty in this war to keep on training a greater number of cadres.

Besides Party cadres we should pay close attention to non-Party leaders. We cannot afford to neglect any man of ability. We must correct our old sectarian habit and work with all the non-Party leaders, sincerely rally them together, help them in their work with good intentions, and show them a warm comradely attitude. In this way we can organise their natural talents and enthusiasm into the channel of armed resistance and national reconstruction. This is the duty of every Communist. To wallow in self-styled superiority and to see no one but one's self are incompatible with good Communist work.

In order to distinguish between the good and the bad, between the strong and the weak in selecting candidates for leadership, it is necessary not only to see the superficial qualities, but also the fundamental character; not only to base our judgment upon the deeds of a short time but upon the whole history of the work of any individual.

The use of cadres is also an important problem. The duty and task of a leader can be summarised in two points; namely, the formulation of plans and the use of cadres. All the planning, decisions, orders, guidance, reports and speeches belong to the formulation of plans. To put a plan into practice it is necessary to rally enough cadres together and mobilise them for action—in other words—to make use of them.

The Two-fold Struggle facing the Party now

As the war goes on the most important political struggle facing the Party is the fight against pessimism from the right; but at the same time attention must be given to leftist over-zealousness. In the Party, the United Front and the mass organisations a continuous

struggle against the leftist shut-door policy should be maintained to facilitate the growth of the Party, the peoples' movement, and unity. It should be remembered that the unconditional development of unity is right opportunism, which, if allowed to grow, will have just the opposite result—it leads logically to united surrender and unprincipled developments.

Our two-fold struggle must have a concrete basis. Merely looking at the question in the abstract does not produce good results. Abstract discussion and concrete application are two different things.

In the struggle against both the left and the right tendencies it is important to watch for manifestations of double-dealing, because of the ease with which such elements slip into the organisation of small cliques. The history of Chang Kuo-tao showed the dangerous activities of these two-faced elements. We must raise the political level of our cadres and Party members so that this kind of double-dealing will not affect Party discipline.

Study

Those Communists who are best equipped for this must study the theories of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin. They must study the history of the nation and the present situation and its tendencies. They must be the teachers of those of our members who are not educated. All our cadres must study, especially the members of the Central Committee. Without revolutionary theory, historical knowledge and understanding of practical work, we cannot lead the revolutionary movement to victory.

Our task of leading a nation of 450,000,000 in an unprecedented historic struggle is a great one. Therefore the study of Marxism by the masses is a question of cardinal importance. Let us study hard. Let us begin a competition in the study of Marxism after the Sixth Plenum. The more revolutionary knowledge we gain, the better it will be for our work. We have done quite well in our work thus far, but more theoretical knowledge will enable us to improve our work. Regarded from the standpoint of leadership—if we to-day had one to two hundred Marxists of the highest calibre it would be equivalent to defeat for the Japanese imperialists. Comrades, we must carry on a systematic and practical study of Marxism.

We must study our historic inheritance and by the use of the Marxist method draw critical conclusions from such study. Our national history of several thousand years has a definite pattern of development. In this we are mere grammar school students. China to-day is a part of the historic China. We consider history from the Marxist viewpoint but we should not disregard history. From Confucius to Sun Yat-sen and now to us we are the living heritage of all the good things of our history. This heritage can be turned into practical methods with which we lead the great national movement to-day. The Communists are at

once Marxists and internationalists, but Marxism must go through the stage of nationalism before it becomes a reality. There is no abstract Marxism—only concrete Marxism, that is Marxism that has passed through nationalism. This is the application of Marxism to the actual conditions of the national struggle in China to-day. A Chinese Communist is a part of this great nation with the closest of blood ties. For such a Communist to talk of Marxism as removed from all national characteristics is merely empty abstraction; because Marxism as applied in China has its special nature, because it is applied according to the existing conditions. This must be made clear to all Communists without delay. Let us stop writing straight-jacket essays as of old, sing less abstract songs and take a rest from following a mechanical schedule. Let us change over to new activities. There cannot be any separation of internationalist content from nationalist form. Such a separation leads to telling the backward masses what they like to hear, that is the pæan of praise about their own country. This is an actual promotion of chauvinism, not the work of internationalists. Communists must understand the indivisibility of the internationalist content from the nationalist form. In our ranks there is still this kind of short-coming which should be overcome without delay.

What are the characteristics of our movement at the present time? What is their governing factor? In what way can we guide the movement? These are all practical questions. To this day we have not yet acquired a full understanding either of Japanese imperialism or of the situation in China as a whole. In the process of the development of the movement new phenomena occur all around us. We must study all these new phases or be counted Don Quixotes rather than Marxists. How to carry on our studies? By the use of our Marxist instrument—dialectical materialism. From whom shall we learn? We have many opportunities to learn from the workers, peasants, small business men, landlords, Japanese imperialists and the world at large. They are the object of our studies and analysis and at the same time, our teachers. Regardless of whatever we gain from our studies, we must carry on tirelessly.

From the rallying of the entire Party to the rallying of the entire nation.

We need great forces to carry on our tremendous struggle. It has already been decided that our main aim is to rally the entire nation, mobilise all the inherent power for this struggle. To reach this aim the first decisive step is to rally together the entire Party.

To-day, in our Party, on the political principles, war strategy and tactics and the estimate of the present situation, the opinion of the Central Committee and the entire Party has been united. The unanimous support of our political principles is the foundation for internal party unity. In establishing a harmonious relationship among Party members, cadres and leaders we have learned the correct method of work and

created a comradely atmosphere in the midst of carrying out our political policy. Because of the greatness of our territory, the complicated situation and the dissimilar characteristics of different lines of work, there are natural differences of opinion. This is permissible. The democratic structure of our Party allows room for discussions and exchange of opinion from which conclusions can be drawn and our Party policies more completely unified. We have also learned from Marxism not to view any situation subjectively. The entire Party and its leaders have emerged from seventeen years of severe struggles with a grasp of Marxist methods of work. This is the guarantee for the internal unity of the Party which forms a steel core of unity for the entire nation. Comrades, let us strengthen our internal unity and fight for national unity and for ultimate victory.

The Working Men's International Association

(Established September 28, 1864, at a Public Meeting
held at St. Martin's Hall, Long Acre, London).

75 YEARS AGO the Working Men's International Association was formed as a gathering of all the forces of the working classes of each country against the Home and Foreign Policy of their Governments and against the existence of Class Rule. To-day, when similar Foreign Policies have led to the Nazi war of aggression the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the First International recalls to us the need in our time of such an all-in working class organisation. Had such an all-embracing gathering of force existed in the past few years, fighting for the cause of the Spanish people, there could have been victory for democracy and peace that would have curbed Fascism and prevented this present war.

Those who were responsible for that first meeting with its delegations from France and other countries, and for the message sent, "To the Workmen of France from the working men of England" were leading English trade unionists. They welcomed their "brethren of France" and called for "a fraternity of peoples" in a message which dealt with a criminal foreign policy. In language whose tones are still to be heard in the preamble of many a Trade Union Rule Book, they concluded :

We again say "fraternise." Let us have a perfect understanding with all men whose prospects are in peace, in industrial development, in freedom, and human happiness all over the world. Do this, that the strong and brave, instead of being led forth with fire and sword to kill and destroy, to satisfy the craving desire of traders for gold, ministers for place, and despots for conquest, may live to make their homes happy, and use their strength to assist the weak, the aged, and the destitute, with the consolation of being free from the miseries produced by war.

We say with you, let our first united effort to be for the freedom of Poland : the justness of her cause demands it, treaty obligations make it imperative, and duty points the way. Petitions must be prepared immediately by the people of both countries, setting forth the indisputable claims of the Poles to belligerent rights and presented simultaneously to our respective governments, supported by an earnest determination to act again and again in behalf of that deserving people. We must do this to prevent the intrigues of secret diplomacy (that scourge of nations), by which the devil's tragedy would be played over again—Poland's noblest sons be murdered, her daughters become the prey of a brutal soldiery, making that fair land once more a huge slaughterhouse to the everlasting shame and disgrace of the civilised world.

Signed on behalf of the working men of England.

THOS. GRANT FACEY (Painter), *President*.

WILLIAM CREMER (Joiner).

C. GODDARD (Bookbinder).

JOHN EGLINTON (Carpenter).

GEORGE ODGER (Shoemaker),

Honorary Secretary.

Because the Trade Unionists had come to the fore, Marx saw the importance and possibilities of the new body, took part in its work and drafted the address and rules. This is made clear by the letter he wrote to his friend Weydemeyer in November, 1864;

... I am sending you simultaneously by mail four copies of a printed address drafted by me. The newly-established International Workingmen's Committee, in whose name it is issued, is not without importance. The English members of the same consist mostly of the chiefs of the local trades unions, that is, the actual labour kings of London, the same fellows who prepared the gigantic reception for Garibaldi, and prevented Palmerston from declaring *war* upon *The United States*, as he was on the point of doing, through the monster meeting in St. James's Hall (under Bright's chairmanship).

There had been many precursors of the First International and attempts to build international organisation. The Chartists had an international outlook and connections. So had the numerous secret societies of working men in France and Germany in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Above all, there had been the manifesto of 1848 drafted by Marx and Engels with its concluding slogan "proletarians of all lands, unite!" which summed up the aspirations of a generation which had been groping for international action.

After 1848, in the fifties and early sixties, other attempts had been made but without a really effective basis. Marx held away from these smaller groupings and in the address which he wrote for the new body he explained the conditions that came after the failure of the Revolution of 1848:

The defeat of the continental working classes, partly owed to the diplomacy of the English government, acting then as now in fraternal solidarity with the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, soon spread its contagious effects to this side of the Channel. While the rout of their continental brethren unmanned the English working classes, and broke their faith in their own cause, it restored to the landlord and the money-lord their somewhat shaken confidence. They insolently withdrew concessions already advertised . . .

All the efforts made at keeping up, or remodelling, the Chartist movement, failed signally; the press organs of the working class died one by one of the apathy of the masses, and, in point of fact, never before seemed the English working class so thoroughly reconciled to a state of political nullity. If, then, there had been no solidarity of action between the British and the continental working classes, there was, at all events, a solidarity of defeat.

Consequently, Marx and Engels had not participated in the numerous endeavours to recall "the years that the locusts had eaten," endeavours marred by an inability to realise the reality of surrounding conditions.

In the second half of the century, too, many were still living in the 'forties.

But now there was a new possibility. Marx pointed out that the compensating features of that period after the defeat of 1848. In the address he singled out two great facts. The first was the success of the Trade Unionists' struggle :

After a thirty years' struggle, fought with most admirable perseverance, the English working classes, improving a momentaneous split between the landlords and money-lords, succeeded in carrying the 'Ten Hours' Bill. The immense physical, moral, and intellectual benefits hence accruing to the factory operatives, half-yearly chronicled in the reports of the inspectors of factories, are now acknowledged on all sides.

... the middle class had predicted, and to their heart's content proved, that any legal restriction of the hours of labour must sound the death knell of British industry, which, vampire-like, could but live by sucking blood, and children's blood, too. In olden time, child murder was a mysterious rite of the religion of Moloch, but it was practised on some very solemn occasions only, once a year, perhaps, and then Moloch had no exclusive bias for the children of the poor. This struggle about the legal restriction of the hours of labour raged the more fiercely since, apart from frightened avarice, it told indeed upon the great contest between the blind rule of the supply and demand laws which form the political economy of the middle class, and social production controlled by social foresight, which forms the political economy of the working class.

Hence the 'Ten Hours' Bill was not only a great practical success; it was the victory of a principle; it was the first time that in broad daylight the political economy of the middle class succumbed to the political economy of the working class.

The second feature was the growth of the Co-operative Movement, which Marx hailed as a still greater victory of the political economy of labour over the political economy of property. He mentioned especially the co-operative factories and considered that the value of these great social experiments could not be over-rated.

By deed instead of by argument, they have shown that production on a large scale, and in accord with the behests of modern science, may be carried on without the existence of a class of masters employing a class of hands; that to bear fruit, the means of labour need not be monopolised as a means of dominion over, and of extortion against, the labouring man himself; and that, like slave labour, like serf labour, hired labour is but a transitory and inferior form, destined to disappear before associated labour plying its foil with a willing hand, ready mind and a joyous heart.

After a tribute paid to Robert Owen and a warning to co-operators that the "lords of the land and the lords of capital" would defend their properties by use of their political privileges, Marx drew the conclusion that a further step had to be taken by the working-class movement. "To conquer political power," he said, "has therefore become the great duty of the working classes." He was able to point to simultaneous revivals taking place in England, Germany, Italy and France and simultaneous efforts for the political reorganisation of "the working-men's party."

Marx went on to stress two things—the need for unity in action

and the need for theory—as the conditions which would yield success to the vast numerical superiority of the working class : numbers weigh only in the balance, if united by combination and led by knowledge. Defeat would come upon disregard of “that bond of brotherhood, which ought to exist between the workmen of different countries.”

In the actual rules of the Association the words of the preamble show how Marx was able to take this gathering of the new elements together with the old Chartists, the followers of Mazzini, followers of Proudhon in France and elsewhere and began that welding process which made the First International not only the first effective gathering of all forces but also the source from which were to flow the socialist and communist parties of every country in the world.

The preamble and the rules were accepted by the Committee. How far they were accepted in all their implications is not clear : but the process had begun. The international began to grow. In England union after union joined it, *e.g.*, The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, now the A.E.U. Within the organisation the influence of Marx grew until he was its acknowledged chief. The preamble became more and more real as the International developed : and remains true for us to-day.

Considering,

That the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves : that the struggle for the emancipation of the working classes means not a struggle for class privileges and monopolies, but for equal rights and duties, and the abolition of all class rule; . . .

. . . That all efforts aiming at that great end have hitherto failed from the want of solidarity between the manifold divisions of labour in each country, and from the absence of a fraternal bond of union between the working classes of different countries ; . . .

. . . That the present revival of the working classes in the most industrious countries of Europe, while it raises a new hope, gives solemn warning against a relapse into the old errors and calls for the immediate combination of the still disconnected movements.

R. PAGE ARNOT.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED.

The New Democracy and the New Despotism. Charles E. Merriam. (McGraw-Hill). 15s. 278 pp.

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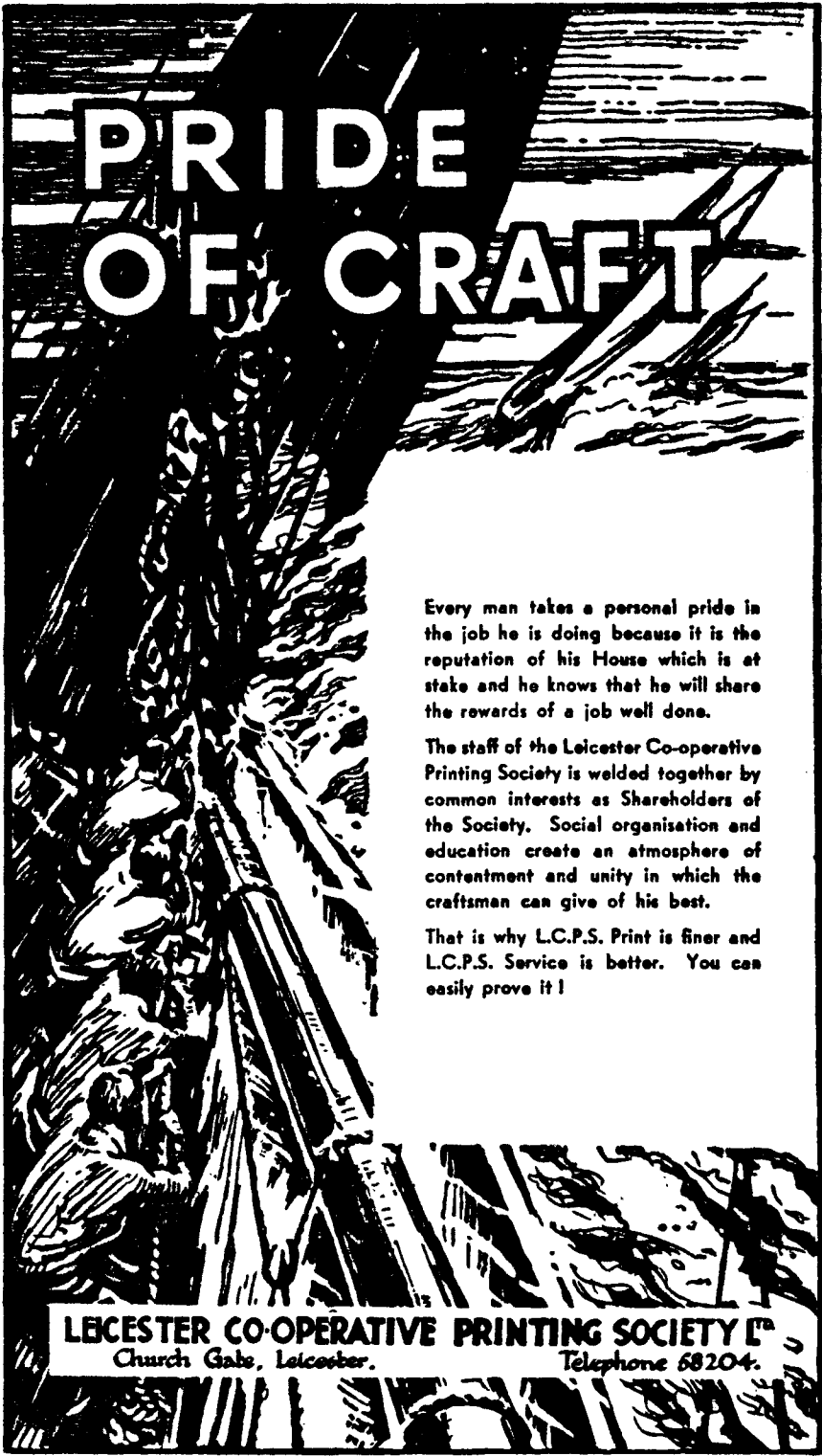
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